



Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area Business Plan

Fiscal Year 2004





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US Department of the Interior
Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area
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Introduction

The purpose of business planning in the National Park Service is to improve the abilities of parks to more clearly communicate their financial status with principal stakeholders. A business plan answers such questions as: What is the business of this park unit? How much money does this park need to be operated within appropriate standards? This plan demonstrates the functional responsibilities, operational standards, and financial picture of the park.

The business planning process is undertaken to accomplish three main tasks. First, it provides the park with a synopsis of its funding history. Second, it presents a clear, detailed picture of the state of current park operations and funding. Finally, it outlines park priorities and funding strategies.

A common methodology is applied by all parks developing business plans. Park activities are organized into five functional areas, which describe all areas of business for which a park is responsible. The functional areas are then further broken down into 35 programs. This allows the park to move beyond the traditional National Park Service method of reporting expenditures in terms of fund sources, and instead report expenditures in terms of activities. As a result, the park can communicate its financial situation more clearly to external audiences. Furthermore, using the same 35-program structure for all parks provides a needed measure of comparability across park units.

This process is aided by the use of an Electronic Performance Support System, a web-based application that allows parks to complete the data collection, analysis, and document production with step-by-step instruction.

Completing the business plan process not only enables a park to produce a powerful communication tool, but also provides park management with financial and operational baseline knowledge for future decision-making.

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Superintendent's Foreword



Superintendent Reed E. Detring

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (NRRA) is a rugged 125,000 acre park located in southeastern Kentucky and northeastern Tennessee. The park has incredible scenery, spectacular sandstone bluffs, immense natural arches, and untold numbers of ancient American Indian sites. The park is a recreational haven for equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers, climbers, backcountry campers, and other nature lovers from all over the eastern and southern United States. Steeped in the history of the Cumberland Plateau, the park is the scene for the retelling of many of the stories relating to this unique and independent geographic area. The park celebrates the local people and history through annual festivals such as the Spring Planting Festival and the Haunting in the Hills Storytelling Festival.

The park completed its first General Management Plan (GMP) in the spring of 2005. This document, which will guide the management of the park for the next 15 to 20 years, comes at a pivotal point in the development of the area. The park is facing increased pressure from the divergent and at times conflicting activities of its many user groups. In the face of this challenge, it becomes ever more important that Big South Fork managers find fair and equitable ways to provide outstanding service to our visitors while continuing to protect the park's irreplaceable natural and cultural resources.

The cost involved in the maintenance of approximately 400 miles of horse, bicycle, multiple-use and hiking trails is escalating each year. Maintaining the aging infrastructure of the park will require many creative and bold actions. The implementation of the park's newly approved GMP will not just require the work of the park's paid staff, but will also require active involvement of an army of citizen volunteers who have shown their love of this magnificent resource.

This business plan provides a fresh perspective on the park's financial situation. It provides a systematic look at the needs, capabilities, and resources of the park. The

document is a critical communication tool that will help us demonstrate to park stakeholders what it will take to move the park forward. Preparation of the plan has been led by a team of consultants provided through the National Park Service Business Plan Initiative and the Student Conservation Association, but has only become a reality due to the generous participation of the Big South Fork park staff. We look forward to using the document to carry our message to our constituents, user groups, and other interested parties so that we can manage this incredible resource to the best of our ability.

The park works closely with several extremely important partners. This group includes special organizations such as the McCreary County Heritage Foundation, The Friends of the Big South Fork, Historic Rugby, the Southern and Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association, and the tourism wings of the seven local Chambers of Commerce. The business plan provides helpful information to further our partnerships with these special organizations. These relationships are essential to the future management of the park and to the successful and appropriate development of tourism for the economic benefit of the entire region.

I want to thank the staff of Big South Fork NRRA for the incredible amount of work performed and for their enthusiasm in seeing this important plan through to completion. In particular, without the active involvement of the Park Management Team working in concert with the fabulous Business Plan Consultant team of Dan Cohn, Tim Capozzi, and Liv Kirk, this document could never have been possible. Again folks, thank you!

Reed E. Detring

Superintendent

Executive Summary

This business plan is designed to identify and document the capabilities and priorities of Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. The key findings described in this plan show a gap between current funding of the park's operations and the funds necessary to fulfill the goals and mission of the park. The following are a few of the park's most significant challenges and opportunities.

- Operations of the park are not funded sufficiently to meet the goals and mission of the park as defined by Congress or to meet the standards set by the park. In FY2004, Big South Fork spent \$3.7 million on operations and maintenance, while \$5.9 million was required to meet its needs. This shortfall of \$2.2 million represents 37% of the overall funding required by the park identified through the business plan process. Insufficient funding results in the failure to achieve many of the park's primary goals.
- The functional areas with the greatest percentage shortfalls are Resource Protection and Maintenance. The operational shortfall in Resource Protection of 46% jeopardizes the park's ability to carry out its legislative duties to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources. Additional funding is needed to allow for a better understanding of the park's archaeological significance and to aid in managing the park's oil and gas program. Maintenance, which has a shortfall of 41%, encompasses the management and upkeep of the park's infrastructure. The majority of this shortfall relates to the trails program, where additional personnel are needed to maintain the 396 miles of trails.
- Implementation of the General Management Plan (GMP) is critical to future success at Big South Fork. The GMP will guide the management of the park for the next 15 to 20 years. A significant challenge will be to develop a reasonable implementation plan that

realistically and objectively looks at prioritization as well as availability of resources. Required resources will not only include park personnel, but also partners and volunteers in order to make sustainable progress. It will also be important for the park to address its long term resource needs to manage and maintain those aspects of the plan that are executed. Effective communication and education of all user groups will be imperative for the park to express its needs to all stakeholders. Support from these user groups is vital to the park's success.

- The park is looking to the future. Strategies to remedy the funding shortfall at the park rely on revisiting standard practices and finding creative solutions to park challenges. Big South Fork is committed to exploring new and innovative opportunities to reduce costs and generate additional revenue while maintaining focus on its mission. Cost reducing strategies such as conserving energy and consolidating fee collection activities will free up more money for under-funded programs. Additionally, enhancing partnerships and re-examining the campground fee structure will allow for increased revenue for the park. Together, these strategies serve as a basis for the park to have a larger impact without relying solely on an increase in appropriated base funding.

Despite the challenges presented in this plan, the outstanding efforts of park staff, volunteers, and partners create a bright future for Big South Fork NRR.



Angel Falls Overlook. Photo by Chuck Summers.

Park Overview

The Park at a Glance



River rapids with wildflowers in bloom. Photo by Chuck Summers.

The Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area was established by Public Law 93-251 on March 7, 1974, as a means to protect the stunning landscape about to be flooded for a hydroelectric power plant. In a unique congressional legislative act, a partnership was established between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service. Beginning in 1974, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with its experience in managing interstate waterways, was charged with land acquisition, planning, and the development of facilities at the park. Upon completion of these tasks in 1990, the lands and facilities were transferred to the National Park Service for the benefit of the public.

This picturesque park is located in northeastern Tennessee and southeastern Kentucky in some of the most rugged terrain of the Cumberland Plateau. The free-flowing Big South Fork of the Cumberland River and its tributaries pass through 90 miles of scenic gorges and valleys containing a wide range of natural and historic features. Spanning six rural counties, Big South Fork encompasses approximately 125,000 acres. State and federal lands share the northern and western boundaries of the park, offering a variety of habitats for both plants and animals. Within the park, a multitude of creeks and streams run into the north flowing Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. Deep ravines have been carved into the surrounding limestone and sandstone, the erosion creating steep faces, caves, overhangs, as well as falls and river rapids throughout the park.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Big South Fork contains a wealth of natural and cultural treasures. The Big South Fork of the Cumberland River begins within the park where the New River joins the Clear Fork River and flows northward through the park for approximately 49 miles. Weathering processes have produced an impressive array of rock formations, including

arches, mesas, chimneys, cracks, and rock shelters. Twelve Threatened and Endangered plant and animal species are present in the park and extensive measures have been taken to protect these species. Due to logging in the early-to-mid 20th century, most of the forest areas are 2nd or 3rd growth, and early succession. There are approximately 300 active or abandoned oil or gas wells and an estimated 120 abandoned deep coal mine openings within the park.

The rugged terrain and relatively infertile soils of the Cumberland Plateau region resulted in its use as a transportation corridor and hunting area by prehistoric American Indian peoples that inhabited the more fertile Tennessee and Ohio River valleys. The numerous caves and shallow rock shelters within the park provided ready cover for temporary use. Approximately 350,000 archeological artifacts have been found in the park, including many objects of American Indian and Early European settler heritage.



The fall colors at Big South Fork. Photo by Chuck Summers.

Recreational Activities

Recreational opportunities abound for visitors to Big South Fork. In the spring months, epic whitewater rafting, canoeing, and kayaking can be enjoyed on the river.

Canoeing and canoe camping on non-whitewater sections are available all year and are popular with visitors.

Swimming is available at many access points along the river and at the Bandy Creek Pool, one of the few public National Park Service operated swimming pools in the country.

Equestrian usage has increased dramatically over the last several years, with over 180 miles of horse trails within the park. Hiking is a favorite activity with visitors, and with close to 150 miles of hiking trails, one can truly enjoy the park's beauty through this pastime. Other activities include mountain biking, rock climbing, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Developed campgrounds and primitive lodging is available, with backcountry camping allowed with the use of a permit. Scenic overlooks are located in both the Tennessee and Kentucky portions of the park and offer breathtaking views of the gorge and surrounding plateau areas.

Enabling Legislation

On March 7, 1974, the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area was established “for the purposes of conserving and interpreting an area containing unique cultural, historic, geologic, fish and wildlife, archaeologic, scenic, and recreational values, preserving as a natural, free-flowing stream the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River...for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the preservation of the natural integrity of the scenic gorges and valleys, and the development of the area's potential for healthful outdoor recreation...and for the benefit of the economy of the region.” (88 Stat. 43, March 7, 1974)

A Jewel of the Park System

Big South Fork NRRRA preserves and protects one of the nation's finest areas of natural and cultural wealth. Budget constraints severely hinder the park staff's ability to adequately care for the park's countless treasures. Despite these fiscal challenges, the people of Big South Fork are committed to working collaboratively and creatively to ensure the long-term viability of this jewel of the National Park system.



Devil's Cave. Photo by Chuck Summers.

Mission Statement

The Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area is dedicated to providing management for the National Area so that natural and cultural resources are preserved and protected for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Big South Fork of the Cumberland River and its tributaries are preserved in a free-flowing condition, and a broad range of recreational opportunities are provided which benefit the regional economy.

Inventory

General Information

125,310 gross acres

696,114 annual visits in 2004

Cultural & Natural Resources

67 species of fish

147 species of birds

26 species of mussels

475 miles of streams and rivers

1,335 archaeological sites inventoried

177,289 archaeological artifacts

253,600 catalogued archival documents

12 threatened and endangered species

14 historic structures

Park Infrastructure

1 rustic lodge

6 day use areas

1 horse stable

11 river access areas

1 amphitheater

4 improved campgrounds

1 primitive campground

2 visitor centers

180 miles of equestrian trails

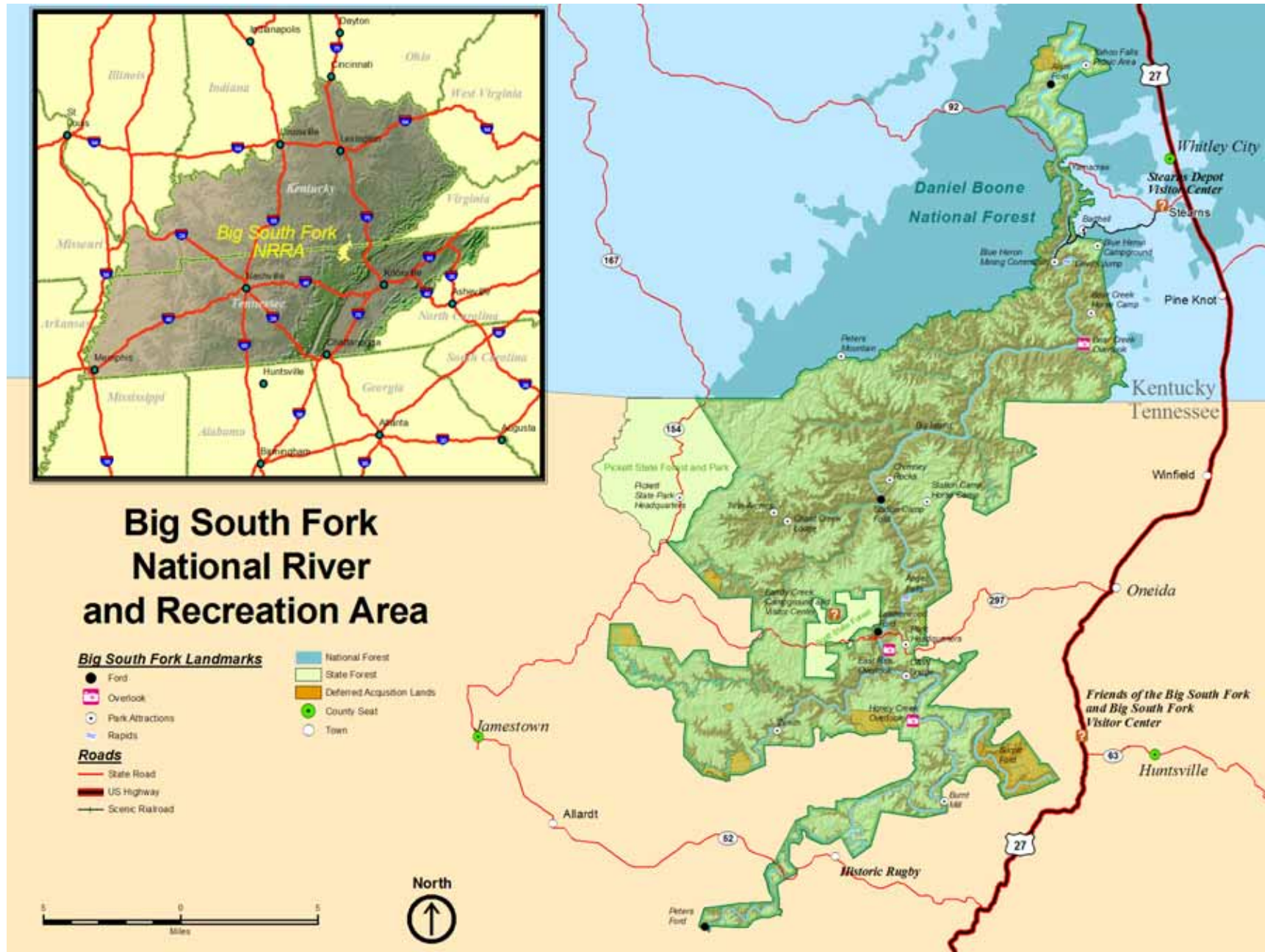
150 miles of hiking trails

20 miles of paved roads

168 miles of unpaved roads

2,000 signs

Park Map



Historical Context

Fund Source Analysis

Activities at Big South Fork are funded from four sources: appropriated base, appropriated non-base, revenue, and reimbursable. Combined annual funding from these sources has grown at an average annual rate of 3.2% over the last nine years, increasing from \$3.2 million in FY1996 to \$4.3 million in FY2004.

Congressionally appropriated base funds, the most significant fund source each year, averaged 74% of park spending from FY1996 to FY2004. These funds are primarily used to pay for permanent staff and day-to-day park operations.

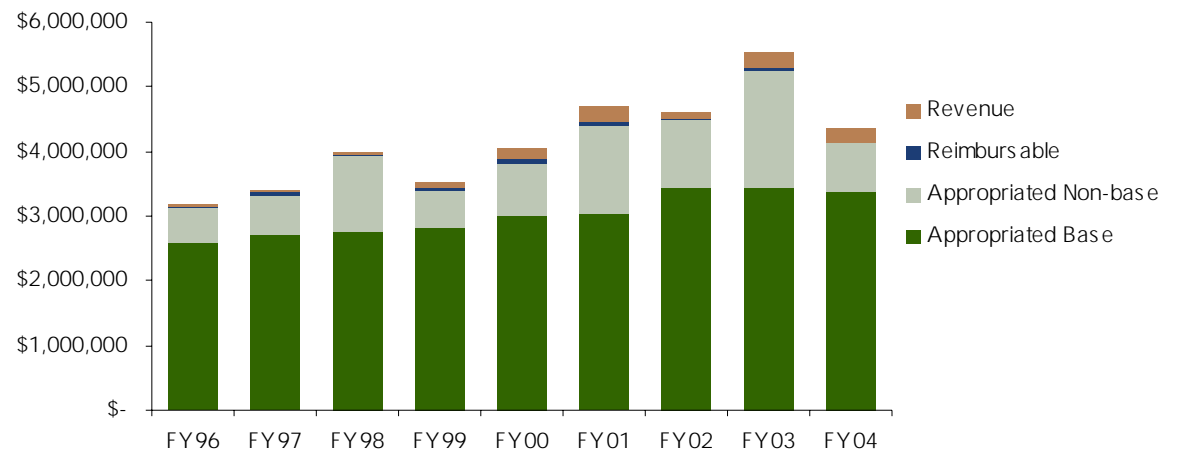
The park also competes for and receives congressional funding beyond the base appropriation. These funds are for one-time projects. Project fund allocations fluctuate between years, reflecting the competitive nature of the application process for this funding. Among the projects funded in FY2003, the park received \$243,000 for emergency removal of downed trees from a southern pine beetle epidemic, \$237,000 for the rehabilitation of trails, and \$272,000 for a survey of the park boundary.

In addition to appropriated and project funds, the park collects revenue from a variety of sources: user fees, concessionaire fees, donations, and incidental business permit fees. In FY2004, the park used \$20,000 of this revenue for rehabilitation of the Rock Creek Loop Trail and \$23,900 to complete the upgrade of electrical service at 98 campsites at the Bandy Creek Campground.

Big South Fork collects reimbursables from several sources including Bandy Creek Stables and Big South Fork Scenic Railway. Together, all reimbursable sources accounted for \$26,000 in FY2004.

Congressionally appropriated base funds, the most significant fund source each year, averaged 74% of park spending from FY1996 to FY2004.

Historical Expenditures by Fund Source



Adjusted Base Budget

In both FY2003 and FY2004 the CPI adjusted budget fell by about 2%.



Chimney Rock. Photo by Chuck

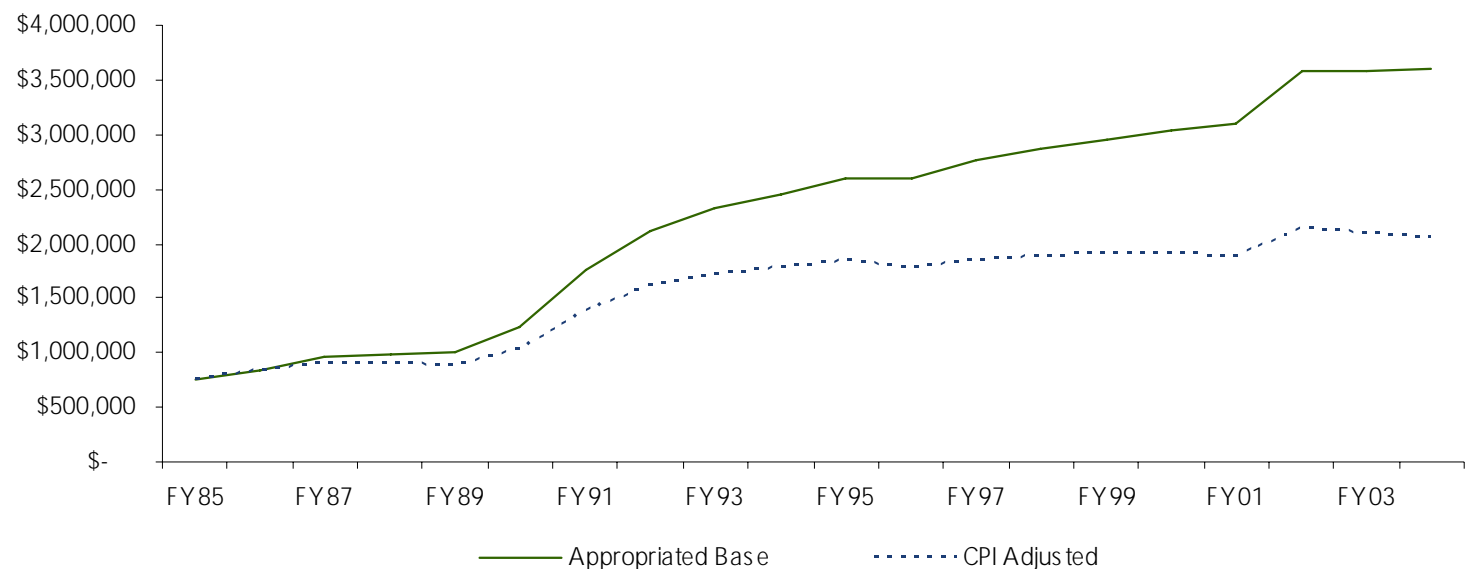
Big South Fork's appropriated base budget has steadily increased in nominal terms since FY1985. The park's Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjusted base budget, reflecting the dollar value of the park's funding adjusted for inflation, has grown at a more modest rate over the same time period. In recent years, however, the CPI adjusted budget has declined. In both FY2003 and FY2004 the CPI adjusted budget fell by about 2%. This trend has necessitated increased use of non-appropriated base funds to cover typical operational expenses. For example, in FY2004, project money was required to finance rehabilitation of 20 miles of the North White Oak Loop Trail. Such rehabilitation projects are made necessary by insufficient base funds to support regular trail maintenance.

In FY2002, the park's appropriated base budget jumped 10%. This increase included the operational funding

increase for the salary and benefits of a new visitor and resource protection ranger to help patrol new park lands acquired in 1995. Another \$304,000 in base increase was targeted for additional personnel to extend visitor center operations, expand interpretive programs, establish a museum management program and improve trails maintenance.

In recent years, nominal base budget increases have been more than offset by increases in unfunded mandates, salaries, and assessments charged to Big South Fork by the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior. These assessments totaled \$161,500 in FY2004; a partial list of these assessments include \$31,000 for IT licensing fees and \$8,000 for Department of the Interior-mandated technology reforms.

Appropriated Base Budget History



Analysis of Real Growth

The chart below illustrates the increase in Big South Fork's real labor costs paid from appropriated base funding from FY1996 to FY2004. During this time the park's personnel costs grew by about \$466,000 in real terms. Higher costs in this area are mainly attributable to climbing salary and benefit rates, which have grown from a park average of \$38,400 per FTE in FY1996 to \$63,468 per FTE in FY2004 – a nominal increase of 65% or 37% in inflation-adjusted terms.

Since FY1996, the share of total personnel costs attributable to benefits has risen from 19% to 26% in FY2004. This increase is partially due to an increasing share of employees covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). For employees hired after 1984, park benefit expenses are pegged at about 35% of base salary, as opposed to roughly 12% of base salary under the older Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

The chart below shows a 7.63 FTE decrease in base-funded staff since FY1996. The drop in FTE has not

corresponded to a similar decrease in workload. On the contrary, over the past ten years, the park has grown by over 10,000 acres, requiring additional law enforcement time. Because the park is relatively new, the discovery of species and important archaeological sites has continued at a rapid pace over the same time period. As the inventory of such items has continued to grow, additional staff to monitor and maintain them has lagged. Workload will continue to increase over the next 20 years. Big South Fork's recently completed General Management Plan (GMP) calls for the acquisition of several thousand additional acres of land, the completion of 50 miles of new trails as well as enhancements to the park's education and interpretation programs.

In order to accommodate rising personnel costs, spending in other areas, such as travel and transportation, has declined. Non-labor expenditures, including all park base operational expenditures beyond salary and benefits, have decreased by \$250,969 since FY1996.



Red Bud in bloom. Photo by Chuck Summers.

Operational Costs: Appropriated Base Funding

	FY 1996 Actual Costs		FY 1996 Inflation Adjusted		FY 2004 Actual Costs		Net Cost Increase	
	FTE	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Total
FY1996 Staff	55.24							
Salary		\$30,929	\$1,708,505	\$37,256	\$2,058,047	\$47,175	\$2,605,961	\$547,914
Benefits		\$7,471	\$412,690	\$8,999	\$497,122	\$16,293	\$900,029	\$402,907
Subtotal		\$38,400	\$2,121,196	\$46,256	\$2,555,169	\$63,468	\$3,505,989	\$950,821
New Staff	-7.63							
Salary						\$47,175	(\$359,947)	(\$359,947)
Benefits						\$16,293	(\$124,316)	(\$124,316)
Subtotal						\$63,468	(\$484,263)	(\$484,263)
Total Labor	47.61		\$2,121,196		\$2,555,169		\$3,021,726	\$466,557
Non-Labor			\$491,223		\$591,722		\$340,752	(\$250,969)
Total			\$2,612,419		\$3,146,890		\$3,362,478	\$215,588

Fixed Cost Analysis

Overall, the park has flexibility in spending only about 10% of its appropriated base budget, leaving little room to address changing priorities or other needs.



The park's experienced staff is a critical investment.

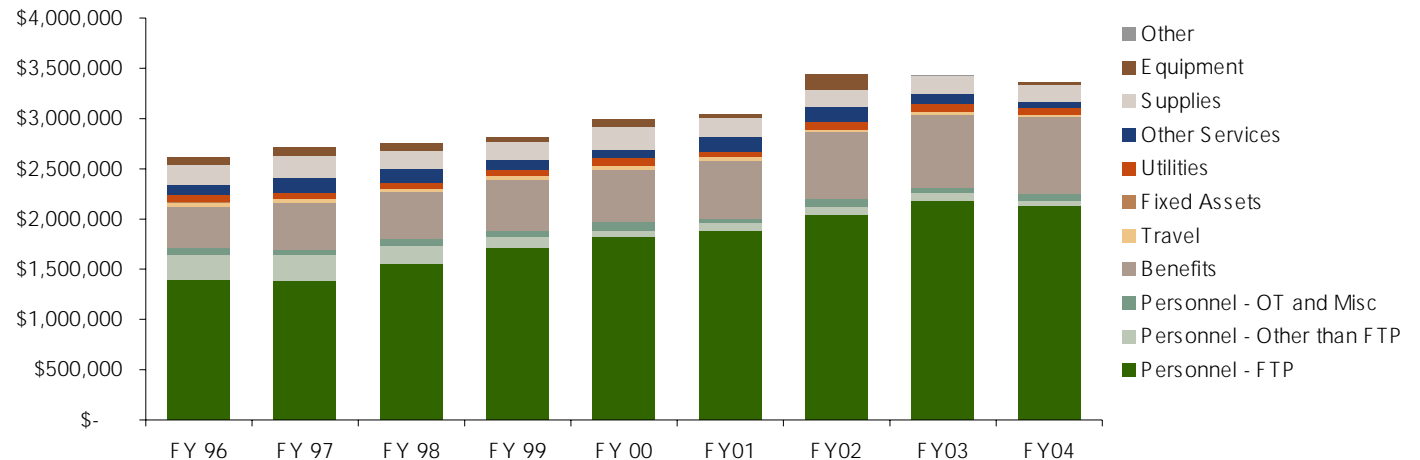
The composition of expenditures from Big South Fork's base budget is an important determinant of the park's flexibility in making financial decisions. Fixed costs, which include salary, benefits, and other personnel expenses, have grown from 81% of the park's base budget in FY1996 to 90% in FY2004. This increase partially reflects the inadequacy of base budget increases to meet annual pay increases. In FY2004, Big South Fork's base increase included a 1% increase targeted to cover annual pay increases. The actual pay increase, mandated by Congress, was 3.9%. Consequently, Big South Fork was required to absorb 2.9% of the total increase in its operating budget.

In addition to Full Time permanent (FTP) employees, the park also uses temporary and seasonal staff. These "other than Full Time permanent" workers, such as visitor use assistants and lifeguards, offer the park flexibility in meeting its needs. The park can reduce the number of months it employs such staff, as it did in FY2004 when the swimming pool was closed.

Increasingly, funding for these positions must be supplemented by non-base sources. Base expenditures on positions other than Full Time permanent have decreased from 10% of base funds in FY1996 to only 1% in FY2004.

Overall, the park has flexibility in spending only about 10% of its appropriated base budget, leaving little room to address changing priorities or other needs. This low degree of flexibility means that the park is increasingly dependent on non-recurring fund sources to meet its basic operational requirements.

Historical Appropriated Base Expenditures by Category



Analysis of Expenditures

Similar to the chart on the previous page, the chart below presents Big South Fork's expenditures by category but includes all four fund sources.

Personnel and Benefits represent the largest categories of expenditures at the park, together accounting for 72% of all park expenditures over the nine years from FY1996 to FY2004. In FY2004, these two expenditure categories alone constituted 80% of overall expenditures.

Expenditures in most non-personnel related budget categories have fallen from FY1996 levels. These reductions reflect cutbacks necessitated by diminishing levels of discretionary funds available to the park, such as in training.

The notable fluctuations in expenditures over the past nine years are in the areas of Fixed Assets and Other Services.

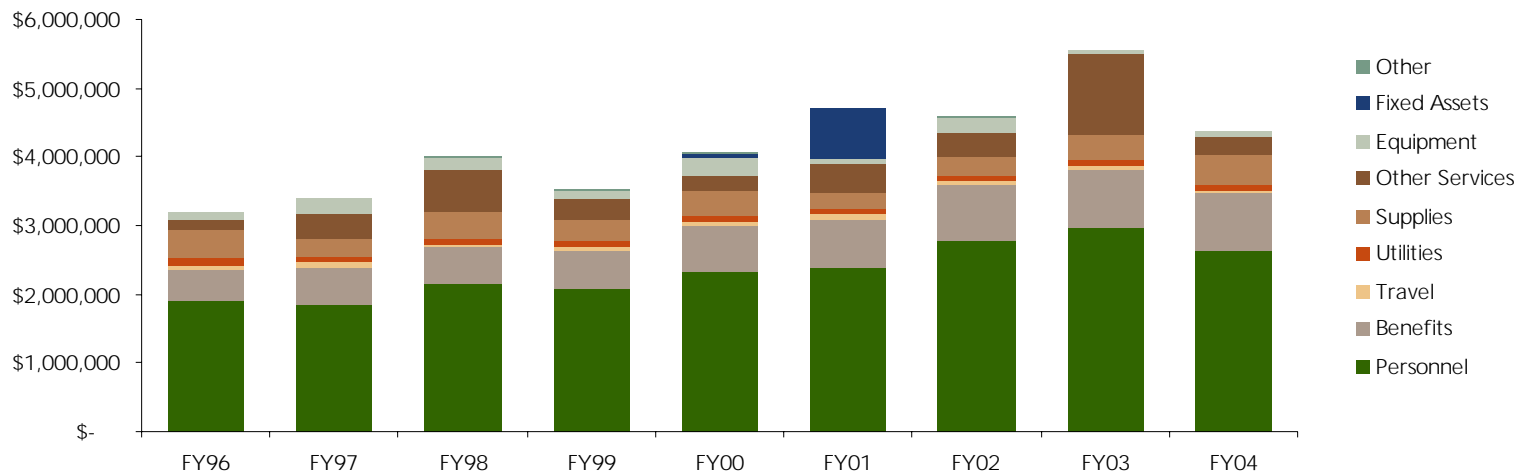
Fixed Assets includes funds spent on land, new structures, and improvements to existing structures. In FY2001, the park spent \$703,000 of land acquisition funds to acquire 890 acres of park land.

Other Services are typically expenses such as contracts, training, and tuition. In FY1998, the park contracted out \$411,000 for the resurfacing of Blue Heron Road and overlaying of the park entrance road. In FY2003, the park paid contractors \$450,000 for the construction of the Tennessee Fire Cache, \$195,000 for the reproduction and replacement of all panels on display at Blue Heron Mining Community as well as wayside exhibits at the mining sites at Worley and Yamacraw, and \$250,000 for work on a park boundary survey.



The display panels at Blue Heron were replaced in FY2003.

Historical Expenditures by Category



Visitation



Many visitors come to see the park's incredible natural features.

Since Big South Fork began tracking visitation statistics in 1988, annual park visitation has averaged roughly 800,000 visits per year. Beginning in 2002, tracking statistics show that park visitation has declined annually, including a decline of nearly 24% in 2004 compared to the peak visitation year of 2001. The decline is driven by several factors:

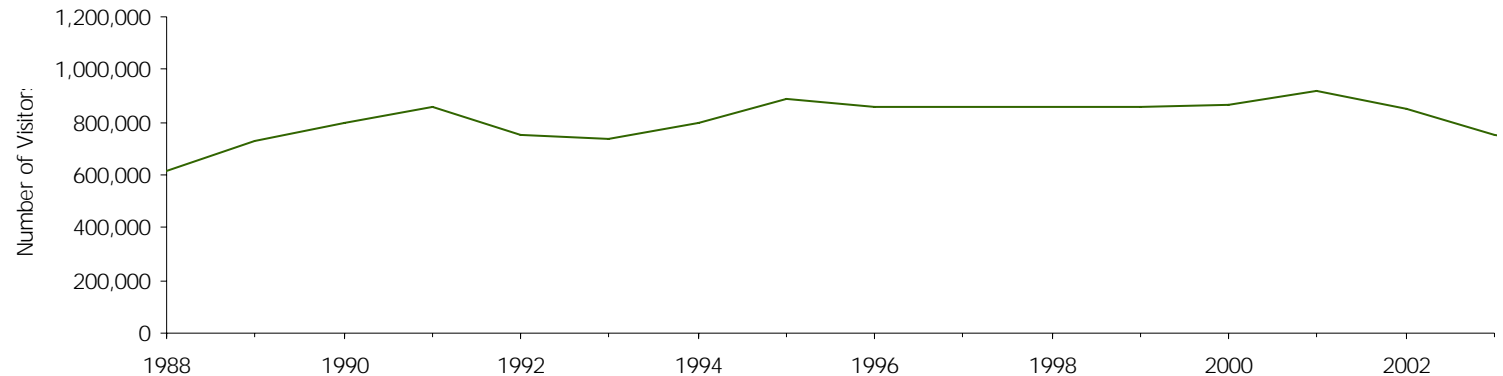
- Road construction - in 2002, Burnt Mill Bridge was closed to motorists. Previous to the closure, approximately 90,000 park visitors each year were recorded by the Burnt Mill Road traffic counter. The majority of these visitors are now entering the park via roads without traffic counters.
- Unreliable traffic counters - beginning in 2002, the O & W East traffic counter has been out-of-service. It is estimated that 40,000 annual visitors are going uncounted due to this issue.
- Regional economic conditions - visitation to all national parks in the southeast region fell by 4.6% in 2004.

Many visitors are never counted by the park due to park geography and numerous entry points. With more and more visitors choosing to stay at horse ranches bordering the park and entering park grounds via untracked routes, uncounted visitors are increasingly common.

Due to the numerous challenges facing the park in obtaining accurate visitation numbers, contact has been made with the National Park Service to conduct a reevaluation of the park's visitation tracking methodology.

Visitation patterns to the park have remained fairly steady in recent years, with peak seasons remaining the summer and autumn months. Although visitation declines each year following the foliage season, hunting activities keep the park populated year-round.

Historical Visitation



Current Park Operations

This business plan differentiates between two types of expenditures: Operations & Maintenance, and Investments. Operations & Maintenance requirements are those funds needed to carry out everyday operations at a park unit. Some examples include annual payroll costs, janitorial operations, and managing a telecommunications network.

On the other hand, investments are significant one-time costs that parks incur in order to fix current problems or provide for future park development. Investments may include projects such as a resource inventory necessary to establish a credible baseline before beginning a monitoring program as well as constructing a new building. This section of the plan focuses on the Operations & Maintenance activities of the park. In order to describe park operations for this business plan, park activities were divided into five functional areas, which describe the five areas of business for which the park is responsible. The five functional areas are:

- Resource Protection
- Visitor Experience & Enjoyment
- Facility Operations
- Maintenance
- Management & Administration

These are then further broken down into 35 programs that more precisely describe park operations. Programs are general in order to cover a broad suite of activities that should be occurring in the park.

The next component of the business planning process is the completion of a detail sheet for each program. These forms describe the day-to-day activities occurring in the park and the totality of financial need associated with them.

Statements of work are developed to describe the suite of activities encompassed by the program. Then operational standards are generated to describe the duties and responsibilities required to meet the critical functions of the program as stated in the statement of work. These standards are then used to determine the total financial resources required to perform the standard tasks of the program. The final step is to compare current park activities to the operational standards to identify the gaps between required and available resources.

The following pages discuss each of the functional areas in detail.



A tranquil view of the Big South Fork. Photo by Chuck Summers.

Resource Protection: encompasses all activities related to the management, preservation and protection of the park's cultural and natural resources. Activities include research, restoration efforts, species-specific management programs, wildland fire management, archives and collections management, historic site protection, and information integration activities.

Visitor Experience & Enjoyment: includes all park activities directly related to providing visitors with a safe and educational experience while at the park. It includes all interpretation, visitor center management, interpretive media, in-park concessions management, fee collection, and visitor safety services.

Facility Operations: includes all activities required to manage and operate the park's infrastructure on a daily basis. Buildings, roads, trails, utilities, and campgrounds require a range of operational activities from basic sanitation to snow plowing to water testing.

Maintenance: includes activities directed solely to prolonging the life of park assets and infrastructure through substantial repair, replacement or rehabilitation of park assets, such as buildings, roads, trails, utilities, fleet vehicles, and equipment.

Management & Administration: encompasses all parkwide management and administrative support activities. It includes all park communications and external affairs activities, park level planning, human resource management, information technology, park leadership, and financial management.

Resource Protection



Lady Slippers, one of the many flowers of Big South Fork.

The park's history as a site of significant oil and gas activity and continued heavy use as a recreation area present resources managers with numerous challenges.

Resource Protection at Big South Fork encompasses activities related to the management, preservation, and protection of a variety of natural communities and processes, historic structures, cultural landscapes, museum artifacts, and archaeological sites. In addition to scientists and technicians, law enforcement personnel work within Resource Protection to provide site patrols, resource damage detection, and criminal investigation and prosecution.

Overall, Resource Protection constitutes 20% of total park expenditures totaling \$739,000 in FY2004. The total deficit for this functional area is \$638,000 and 11.1 FTE, the largest in the park.

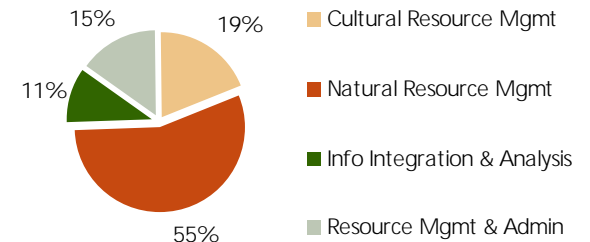
Resource Protection includes the following programs:

Natural Resource Management

Big South Fork's natural resources are biologically diverse and unusually threatened. The park is home to twelve federally listed Threatened and Endangered species including one fish, six mussels, three plants, one bat, and one bird. The park's history as a site of significant oil and gas activity and continued heavy use as a recreation area present resources managers with numerous challenges.

Activities within Natural Resource Management include ecosystem monitoring, research, restoration efforts, species-specific management initiatives, wildland fire management, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) management, and general resource protection. This program had the largest deficit in the park in FY2004, totaling \$307,000. Staffing deficits exist throughout the program. Specific needs include an environmental protection specialist to manage and administer the oil and gas program, wildlife biologists to preserve water quality and aquatic resources, technicians

Resource Protection
FY04 Expenditures by Program



Total Required		Available		Shortfall	
FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds
21.8	\$1,376,919	10.7	\$738,884	11.1	\$638,034

to combat an increasing exotic plant infestation, and a resource management specialist to focus on backcountry resource management.

Cultural Resource Management

In terms of total sites, Big South Fork is the most important archaeological location in the Southeast Region of the National Park Service. Human occupation of the Big South Fork spans over 12,000 years. The Cultural Resource Management program protects this legacy of American Indian and European-American heritage. The 1,335 documented archaeological sites at Big South Fork represent only 20% of the estimated total for the park. Cultural resource staff research, monitor, protect, and restore two National Register (NR) Engineering Structures, twelve NR Historic Structures, four NR Cultural Landscapes and the archaeological remains of seven early 19th-20th century mining or farming communities. In addition, cultural resource staff manages the park's museum collections, including over 253,000 catalogued archival documents and 177,000 archaeological artifacts.

The Cultural Resource Management program is operating at a deficit of \$217,000. A critical deficiency is the lack of knowledge about the location and nature of the archaeological resources in the park. Not having this information leaves unknown archaeological sites open to vandalism and damage. Although the park has an archaeologist on staff, additional personnel are needed to identify vulnerable sites and help develop and implement preservation strategies. In addition, a collections management specialist is needed to manage the preservation of Big South Fork's continuously growing collection of historically and prehistorically significant objects.

Resource Protection Management and Administration

In recent years, almost all Resource Protection staff has experienced an increase in the share of their time devoted to a broad spectrum of management, administration, and planning functions. The objective of this program is to develop, manage, coordinate, and supervise a natural and cultural resource protection effort for a 125,000 acre National Park Service unit while balancing environmental, political, economic, recreational, and social issues. The program keeps abreast of current resource management methods and documents resource impacts. Additional support staff is required in this area to begin work on much needed planning documents, including a Backcountry Management Plan and a Climbing Management Plan.

Information Integration and Analysis

The development and maintenance of a Geographic Information System (GIS) and provision of Geographic Positioning System (GPS) expertise at Big South Fork are provided by a single GIS specialist who is nearing retirement. A technician is needed to assist the specialist and to prepare to take over the program in the future. Besides acting as a bridge between current operations and the future, the technician will improve expediency of data collection, data analysis, and map production in support of data needs from all divisions within the park.



A park wildlife biologist examines mussels found in the park's waters. Big South Fork is home to 26 species of mussels.

The Free-Flowing Big South Fork

The Big South Fork of the Cumberland River represents the last remaining free-flowing segment of the Cumberland River and contains important vestiges of the biological diversity of the Cumberland Plateau. The river is an extremely important national and regional natural resource area and is home to twelve federally-listed Threatened and Endangered species. Preservation of these species depends on protecting the natural quality and quantity of river water.

Historically, 70 mussel species occurred in this section of the Cumberland River. Today, only 26 mussel species are present. Big South Fork mussel populations represent the best protected populations of these imperiled organisms and they may be the last hope for preserving numerous species once common throughout the area. In an effort to protect these unique species, the park is implementing a mussel restoration strategy developed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and the states of Tennessee and Kentucky.

Visitor Experience & Enjoyment



A park interpreter interacts with children from local schools.

Big South Fork's visitors come to the park for a variety of recreational activities including hiking, hunting, fishing, bicycling, kayaking, and horseback riding. Park staff in the Visitor Experience and Enjoyment (VEE) functional area strive to ensure that all visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience at the park. VEE expenditures accounted for \$946,000, or 25% of the park's total FY2004 available operating budget of \$3.7 million.

The largest programs in terms of expenditure in VEE were Visitor Safety Services (44%), Visitor Center Operations (25%), and Fee Collection (13%). The eight VEE programs have identified \$1.4 million in required funding, indicating a shortfall of \$480,000, primarily in the areas of Visitor Safety Services, Education, and Visitor Center Operations.



Visitor protection rangers perform a search and rescue at the park.

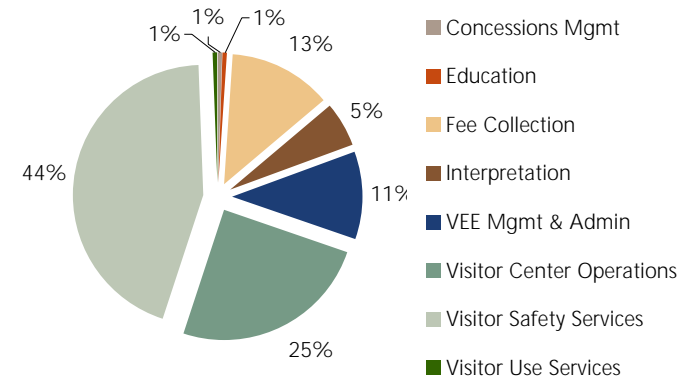
Visitor Safety Services

Big South Fork's law enforcement rangers are primarily responsible for providing safety and security for the park's visitors and infrastructure. Specific visitor safety programs include emergency medical services (twelve cases in 2004), search and rescue (20 incidents in 2004), and law enforcement (292 offenses in 2004). Big South Fork is an area of concurrent jurisdiction, meaning that within the boundaries of the park, the park's law enforcement personnel and the State jointly exercise law enforcement authority. The Visitor Safety Services program has identified funding needs including providing at least two protection rangers on duty when the park is open, building a structural fire program, and providing full emergency medical services coverage. The deficit for this program was \$142,086.

Education

The interpretive division conducts a variety of activities that allow people from elementary age through adulthood to experience and learn about the park's

Visitor Experience & Enjoyment
FY04 Expenditures by Program



Total Required		Available		Shortfall	
FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds
26.2	\$1,429,070	15.3	\$945,820	10.8	\$483,249

learning experiences. Due to current personnel constraints, however, the scope and effectiveness of the education programs is limited.

Visitor Center Operations

Big South Fork's interpreters manage and staff the park's two primary visitor centers (Bandy Creek and Stearns Depot). Re-location of the Kentucky visitor center in 2004 to the Big South Fork Scenic Railway Depot in Stearns resulted in an 87% increase in visitor center visitation in Kentucky over 2003 numbers. Over 30,000 visitors used Big South Fork's visitor centers in FY2004. Further partnerships with local government, community and non-profit organizations to support information center operations is supported through the Park Enabling Legislation and has been identified in the General Management Plan as a park priority. These partnerships would involve working in concert with the above mentioned groups at three new non-park facilities located in neighboring communities.

Interpretation

The goal of interpretive events and media publications is to encourage the development of a personal stewardship ethic and broaden public support for preserving park resources. Interpretive rangers present Big South Fork to visitors through both formal and informal interpretation. Formal interpretation at the park includes campfire and evening programs, talks, demonstrations, and special events, such as the annual Haunting in the Hills Storytelling Festival and the Spring Planting Festival. (See Sidebar.)

Big South Fork's interpretive media infrastructure encompasses outdoor exhibits, visitor center displays, an annual park newspaper, an informational rack card, and maintenance of the park website. In FY2004, work on a major project was completed to replace all exhibit panels with new digitally produced displays at the Blue Heron Mining Community.



With almost 200 miles of horse trails, horseback riding is a favorite pastime at Big South Fork.

Concessions Management

In FY2004, Big South Fork's Concessions Management program supported five concessionaires who collectively served approximately 18,000 park visitors. Services provided by the concessions included a backcountry lodge, two horse camps, a horse stable, a tack shop, and vending machines. The Concessions Management program also administers incidental business permits, which provided four companies permits for commercial services in the park. Currently, responsibility for administering the Concessions program falls to the Chief Law Enforcement Ranger. A dedicated concessions manager would enable the park to explore additional concessions opportunities and to renegotiate contracts, allowing for greater cost recovery.

Fee Collection

Park personnel are responsible for collecting and managing campground and special use permit fees. Staff collects fees at five locations within the park and at 18 private vendors in the surrounding communities. In addition to camping fees, Big South Fork collects fees for a variety of special uses, such as for hog hunting and weddings. In FY2004, Big South Fork's fee collection stations collected more than \$215,000 in campground fees, \$9,000 in backcountry fees, and \$5,000 in other special use fees.

Annual Festivals

Each year, Big South Fork and its neighbors team-up to host two festivals.

The Spring Planting Festival celebrates the cultural history of the Big South Fork region through the practice of springtime subsistence activities historically associated with residents of the area. Held at the Lora Blevins Farm, the festival focuses around a traditional spring planting as it would have occurred in the early 1900s. The centerpieces of the event are the plowing and planting demonstrations using only horse and mule drawn equipment. Other popular demonstrations include soap making, woodworking, blacksmithing, horseshoeing, and sharing herb lore.

The Haunting in the Hills Storytelling Festival began in 1993 as a Parks as Classrooms initiative to bring local stories to area schools. Now in its thirteenth year, the annual festival brings storytelling into the local community and draws the community into the park. In the week prior to Saturday's main event, professional storytellers visit schools and senior citizen centers, altogether reaching 15,000 park neighbors. On Saturday, the park hosts a full day of storytelling programs, dulcimer workshops, craft workshops, and dulcimer and bluegrass concerts. The event concludes that evening with the telling of ghost stories to an audience of several thousand.

Facility Operations



A Facility Operations employee mowing at Bandy Creek.

The Facility Operations functional area at Big South Fork encompasses all day-to-day activities needed to ensure that park facilities are operating smoothly and safely for visitors and employees. This is a considerable undertaking given the park's various geographical landscapes. Typical operational activities include hazardous tree removal on trails and roads, campground management, and janitorial functions. Facility Operations expenditures accounted for approximately 21% of the park's total operating budget with \$777,000 in spending in FY2004. Full funding for Facility Operations would require \$1.2 million, a current funding shortfall of \$431,000.

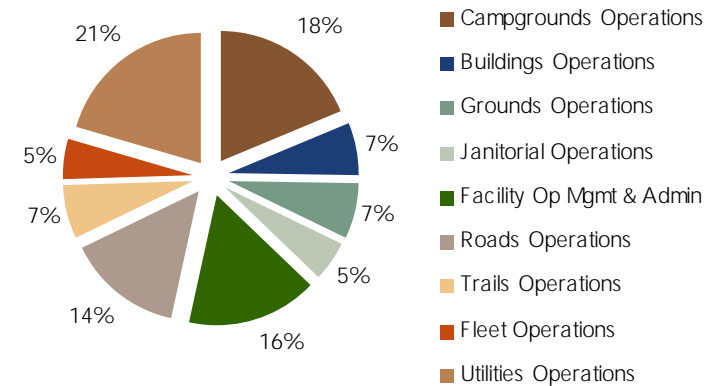
Trail Operations

Big South Fork Trail Operations have focused on removal of hazardous trees and vegetation from trails in order to ensure visitor safety. Due to the southern pine beetle epidemic of 2001, many dead trees fall onto trails each year requiring significant effort by trail workers to clear the debris. (See Sidebar.) In FY2004, \$51,000 was spent on Trail Operations. Additional resources are needed in order to ensure the safety of the many user groups of these trails. Currently, only 1.1 FTE is devoted to the 180 miles of equestrian trails and 150 miles of hiking trails. A shortfall of \$242,000 was identified in FY2004. An additional 5.9 FTE are required for the Trail Operations program to the standards of the National Park Service.

Transportation System and Fleet Operations

This program provides for the operation and management of park fleet vehicles. This program is responsible for providing day-to-day operational support of vehicles and equipment, including purchasing fuel, ordering and picking up parts, and delivering vehicles to local auto shops for repair when needed.

**Facility Operations
FY04 Expenditures by Program**



Total Required		Available		Shortfall	
FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds
20.6	\$1,207,509	12.01	\$776,652	8.6	\$430,857

Janitorial Operations

Janitorial activities within the park are performed to ensure a clean, sanitary environment for park staff and visitors in order to provide high visitor satisfaction and comfort. Comfort stations are cleaned, disinfected, and stocked at least daily within the park. Contractors are used in order to accomplish the park's goals of maintaining a proper appearance. Park staff collects trash within the park and deposits it within the maintenance complex where a contractor then removes it along with all hazardous waste. In Kentucky, contractors are also used to empty dumpsters. This program operated at a shortfall of \$29,000 in FY2004. Additional resources in this program would ensure timeliness of janitorial functions within the park, which directly relates to visitor safety and enjoyment.

Buildings and Utilities Operations

The purpose of Building Operations is to ensure safe, clean, and functional park buildings for the public and employees. There are 88 buildings within the park, including 14 historic structures. Specific tasks include interior painting, pest control, and lock installation. This program operated close to standard and the total funding shortfall for FY2004 was \$15,000. Additional resources are needed for minor repairs and historic structure upkeep.

To ensure that the park's utility infrastructure operates effectively and efficiently, Utility Operations staff identify repair needs and ensures compliance with federal and state regulations. In FY2004, this program operated at a \$19,000 deficit, partly due to increasing utility prices.



Hazard tree removal is an ongoing process at the park in order to ensure visitor safety and satisfaction.

Campground Operations

There are two developed campgrounds at Big South Fork which include 235 campsites. There are also two concession-run horse camps with 47 campsites and one primitive campground with six campsites. Backcountry camping is permitted within the park for a fee. The total number of camper nights in FY2004 was 42,111. Recreational vehicle camping is steadily increasing while tent camping is decreasing within the park. Volunteer campground hosts perform several monitoring and support functions at each of the developed campgrounds. All regular management of the campgrounds and their facilities are included in this program.

The park faces unique challenges due to the operation of one of the only public National Park Service operated swimming pools at Bandy Creek Campground. These challenges include the need for lifeguards and special maintenance of the pool facilities. Due to the popularity of the pool within the local community, the park has taken measures to ensure appropriate upkeep of this facility. This program operates at a \$8,927 deficit.

Hazardous Tree Removal: An Ongoing Process

Due to the southern pine beetle epidemic of 2001, numerous hazardous trees are strewn throughout the vast park region. Approximately five years ago, populations of the southern pine beetle rapidly increased, killing record numbers of pine trees all across the southern United States. While the pine beetle is native to the south and outbreaks have occurred before, this was by far the most devastating and destructive occurrence.

Unfortunately, Big South Fork was not immune to the infiltration of these pesky insects. Due to the danger that the dead trees pose to visitor safety, facilities personnel work diligently to remove unsafe trees from visitor destinations. However, this is an ongoing process that requires immense effort from park staff. Dead pines are so numerous within the Big South Fork boundaries that rangers have posted warning signs alerting hikers to the dangers of falling tree limbs. The challenge to remove precarious dead trees will remain an operational issue going forward and one that requires increased resources to maintain the high levels of service expected by park visitors.

Maintenance

Big South Fork has an extensive trail system with close to 400 miles of trails for many different recreational opportunities, including hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking.



Maintenance workers create appropriate drainage systems to protect trails.

The Maintenance functional area encompasses all activities designed to improve or prolong the life of the park's assets. The preservation of these resources allows for visitors to safely enjoy their activities at Big South Fork. Park personnel confront distinct challenges created by the large geographic separations between park facilities, often traveling long distances to service roads, trails, or buildings. Overall, the Maintenance functional area's spending represented 15% of total park expenditures in FY2004. The program that experienced the largest shortfall was Trails Maintenance.

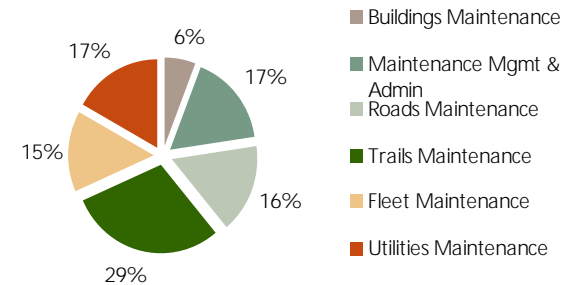
Additional funds are needed for performing proactive maintenance, rather than reactive maintenance. Through proactively addressing issues, the park will achieve cost savings. Operating in a reactionary mode does not allow for the Maintenance Division to adequately plan for problems or issues.

Trails Maintenance

Big South Fork has an extensive trail system with close to 400 miles of trails for many different recreational opportunities, including hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. Trails Maintenance activities include repair and rehabilitation of trails in order to prolong the life of these precious assets. A deficit in Trails Maintenance could lead to increased resource degradation, increased expenses, and increased visitor accident rates. Many of the trails in the park were initially intended for hiking use only. Now that the beauty of Big South Fork has attracted an increasing number of equestrians, additional resources are needed to preserve the trails for this pastime.

The total funding for Trails Maintenance in FY2004 equaled \$166,000 with a shortfall of \$140,000. Additional staff is necessary in order to repair and replace water bars, bridges, steps, and ladders. Furthermore, an

**Maintenance
FY04 Expenditures by Program**



Total Required		Available		Shortfall	
FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds
14.6	\$948,820	9.5	\$563,079	5.1	\$385,741

additional three FTE would provide preventative maintenance focused on reducing damage from run off and erosion.

Transportation Systems and Fleet Maintenance

This program is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 58 light duty vehicles, 4 pieces of heavy equipment, and other vehicles such as dump trucks and backhoes. The park maintains an auto shop at the East Rim Maintenance Complex and services vehicles internally when possible. However, some larger and more technical repairs are contracted to local auto shops. One full time mechanic conducts routine inspections, preventive maintenance, and repairs. In FY2004, this program required a total of \$120,000 to function effectively, resulting in a shortfall of \$36,000. More funding to provide a part time employee would assist with Transportation Systems and Fleet Maintenance.

Buildings and Utilities Maintenance

Buildings Maintenance is dedicated to prolonging the life and improving the interior and exterior condition of the more than 80 buildings at Big South Fork. Of particular importance to the public are the historic structures and visitor use buildings. Activities include repairing roofs and painting the exterior of buildings. In FY2004, \$71,000 was needed for Buildings Maintenance, creating a \$39,000 shortfall. Many of the parks buildings were inherited from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers when the park changed hands in 1991 and will require significant maintenance in the near future.

Utilities Maintenance is concerned with the major repair and rehabilitation of utility systems. These systems include water well systems, electrical systems, HVAC systems, and sewer systems. In FY2004, there was a shortfall of \$49,000 in this program. Most maintenance is done by park staff rather than being contracted out to local businesses. Additional resources in this program will allow the park to be more proactive in Utilities Maintenance rather than operating in a reactionary manner to problems and issues.

Roads Maintenance

The Roads Maintenance program includes services that ensure the safe and effective use of all roadways for park visitors and staff. It is responsible for maintaining all paved and unpaved surfaces, road shoulders, and bridges throughout Big South Fork. Activities include cyclic preventive maintenance as well as repair and rehabilitation work to road surfaces. Paved surfaces are repaired to correct abrupt depressions, potholes, edge failures, and other potential surface hazards in order to provide a smooth paved surface. Unpaved surfaces are graded and stabilized to correct ruts, potholes, and washouts in order to provide a smooth riding surface.



A campground recycling center is one example of Big South Fork's "green" efforts.

Putting the "Conserve" back into Conservation

While Big South Fork already takes measures to recycle, the park will be drafting a Comprehensive Recycling Plan that will be utilized to comply with all federally mandated "greening" initiatives. With the assistance of the Visitor Services and Education staff, the park will draft interpretive text that will be placed on plastic placards and displayed to inform visitors on the benefits of recycling.

Recycling is not a new concept, but it is an important one to understand in order to fulfill the mission of the National Park Service. The Acoma Pueblo Indians tell an ancient story of recycling. A Pueblo Indian woman crafted clay pots that lasted for years of use. When the pots eventually broke, they were not thrown away, but rather crushed into a fine powder. The powder was then soaked to soften it to a workable, clay consistency. This recovered clay was then used to make strong and beautiful new pots.

Today, we use many materials once and then consider them waste. Like broken pots, these materials are actually precious resources.

Management & Administration



The Big South Fork administrative team.

Management and Administration at Big South Fork encompasses activities related to parkwide administrative, managerial, and support functions, as well as safety and planning. In addition, this area is responsible for working with external constituencies in order to develop valuable park partnerships. Altogether, the Management and Administration area provides a host of essential services to enable park employees to focus on their functional duties. Management and Administration expenditures accounted for approximately 19% of the park's total operating budget with \$693,000 in spending.

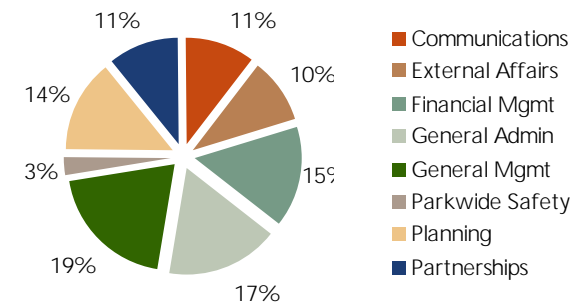
Communications

Technological advancements have significantly affected the park's operations. The Communications program includes meeting mandated security requirements, providing technical support for the park staff's personal computers, and ensuring policies and guidelines are adhered to by park employees. While increasing technological capabilities leads to increased productivity and efficiency, there is significant cost to the park for these improvements. In FY2004, funding for Communications totaled \$74,000. Additional funding is required to maintain network support, security, and technical support within the park.

Another aspect of the Communications program relates to law enforcement and other dispatch services. Park dispatch is currently conducted externally through an arrangement with a local county sheriff's office. In order to improve park dispatch, there is a plan to have park employees working out of the sheriff's office. This plan requires two FTE and an additional \$70,000. The center would serve as a point of contact to manage multi-channel radio communications between federal and state agencies during significant field incidents and would provide both quicker emergency assistance to law

Total Required		Available		Shortfall	
FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds
13.4	\$966,244	9.0	\$692,936	4.4	\$273,308

Management & Administration
FY04 Expenditures by Program



enforcement staff and improved field communications across all divisions.

General Management The management team at Big South Fork provides executive oversight on a wide variety of park activities. This includes staff development activities designed to promote increased capabilities among park employees and coordinating park operations among different divisions. This program was funded at a \$77,000 shortfall in FY2004. A need was identified for a personnel assistant to provide improved human resources capabilities for the park.

General Administration: The General Administration program incorporates a wide variety of functions required to support the park's basic mission responsibilities. Administrative functions primarily concern procurement, contracting, management of the park's files, and clerical duties. The total shortfall for FY2004 was \$44,000 and a need was identified to upgrade the purchasing agent position to assume high-level procurement and contracting responsibilities.

Parkwide Safety

The Parkwide Safety program ensures management of employee safety training and planning, as well as environmental compliance for hazardous materials. The Safety Council within the park plays a critical role in Parkwide Safety by meeting on a regular basis and addressing safety concerns, and recognizing outstanding safety practices. Furthermore, training is provided on vital safety practices including First-Aid, CPR, and Defensive Driving. This program operated close to standard and had a shortfall of \$22,000 in FY2004.



Devil's Jump. Photo by Chuck Summers.

External Affairs and Partnerships

Developing and maintaining positive relationships with a wide array of constituents is critical. Partners of the park include the Friends of Big South Fork, government agencies, universities, volunteer groups, and non-profit organizations. The Public Information Officer is responsible for maintaining open, candid relationships with the media and other stakeholder groups and individuals. Press releases, fact sheets, and briefing papers all fall under the External Affairs program. External Affairs also devotes time to working in conjunction with local communities, acting as a liaison to the Congressional delegation, and serving as the main contact point for information requested by the public. In FY2004, the External Affairs and Partnerships programs operated at a combined shortfall of \$18,000.

Financial Management

Financial Management ensures proper oversight of the park's budget activities. This includes the formation and execution of the budget and all accounting activities and annual reporting requirements. A major function of this program is to provide methods of projecting costs, assessing deviations, estimating needs, and recommending spending controls to the different park divisions.

Planning

All planning analyses and efforts occur within this program. During FY2004, the park analyzed and completed the Supplemental Draft General Management Plan, including reviewing over 150 comment letters on the plan. The final plan was presented to congressional offices, the Southeast Regional and Washington Offices of the National Park Service, and the Department of the Interior by the Superintendent and key park staff. The GMP illustrates the park's plan to balance the managing of resources over the next 15 to 20 years. Other planning activities in FY2004 included the Fields Management Plan, Fire Management Plan, Freshwater Mussel Recovery Plan, and numerous compliance efforts.

Partnerships: Critical Relationships

Partnerships are a vital aspect to successful operations at the park. With over 30 formal partnerships, Big South Fork relies heavily on mutual relationships to accomplish key tasks that support the park's mission. Examples of the park's numerous partners include:

- Friends of the Big South Fork work to support the park with fund-raising and community involvement projects each year. Examples of these events include the Storytelling Festival, River Clean-up Day, and the Spring Planting Festival.
- McCreary County Heritage Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the cultural history of McCreary County, Kentucky. The organization operates the Big South Fork Scenic Railway and works with the park in many areas, including the operation of the Blue Heron facility.
- Southern and Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association supports tourism efforts for southern and eastern Kentucky and assists with many issues by addressing them as regional concerns as opposed to more individual or localized affairs.

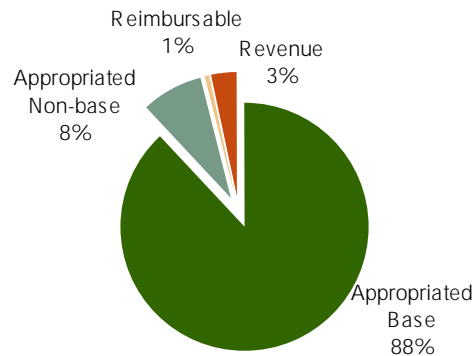
Financials

Summary Financial Statement

All functional areas demonstrated deficits, with the greatest shortfall occurring in Resource Protection.

The Summary Financial Statement on the following page outlines the funding needed on an annual basis to support the park's operational requirements for each of the five functional areas, across the 35 programs. FY2004 expenditures are displayed according to fund source and are compared to the program's funding requirements to determine the corresponding shortfall or surplus. Investments, totaling approximately \$600,000, are not included in this financial summary because they are one-time expenditures and do not represent annually recurring needs.

FY04 Expenditures by Fund Source



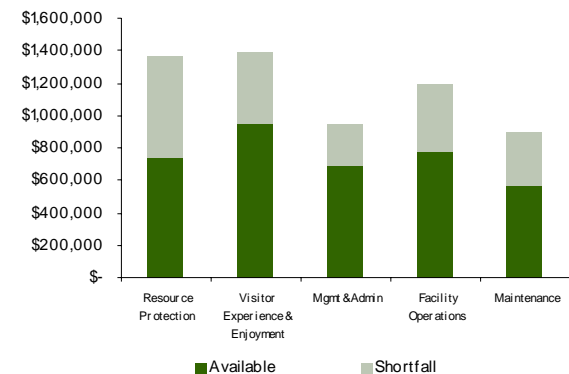
In FY2004, Big South Fork required an operational budget of \$5.9 million and 96.5 FTE (full-time equivalents). However, the park only had \$3.7 million and 56.5 FTE available. This corresponds to a funding shortfall of 40 FTE and \$2.2 million, or 37% of required funding.

All functional areas demonstrated deficits, with the greatest shortfall occurring in Resource Protection. The \$1.4 million funding requirement in Resource Protection exceeded the available funds in FY2004 by \$638,000, or 46% of required funding. Visitor Experience and Enjoyment experienced a 34% shortfall in funding.

Facility Operations and Maintenance also illustrated an overall deficit in funding for FY2004. These shortfalls were 36% and 41%, respectively. The programs within these two functional areas requiring the greatest need was Trails Operations and Maintenance. Altogether, the trails programs require a significant injection of funding to maintain and preserve the park's resources and assets.

The smallest shortfall occurred in Management and Administration, which required an additional \$273,000, or 28% of required funding.

FY04 Required Funds by Functional Area



FUNCTIONAL AREAS AND PROGRAMS	REQUIRED		AVAILABLE				TOTAL		SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	
	FTE	Funds	APPROPRIATED	NON-APPROPRIATED	Reimbursable	Revenue				
FUNCTIONAL AREAS AND PROGRAMS	FTE	Funds	Base	Non-base	Reimbursable	Revenue	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds
RESOURCE PROTECTION										
Cultural Resource Management	5.5	\$358,002	\$133,997	\$6,700	\$36	\$0	1.9	\$140,733	(3.7)	(\$217,269)
Information Integration and Analysis	2.0	\$128,437	\$77,788	\$505	\$0	\$0	1.0	\$78,293	(0.9)	(\$50,145)
Resources Management and Administration	2.6	\$175,920	\$110,225	\$1,737	-\$399	\$1,451	1.8	\$113,014	(0.8)	(\$62,906)
Natural Resource Management	11.6	\$714,559	\$354,140	\$51,506	\$540	\$658	5.9	\$406,844	(5.7)	(\$307,715)
Subtotal	21.8	\$1,376,919	\$676,150	\$60,448	\$177	\$2,109	10.7	\$738,884	(11.1)	(\$638,034)
VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND ENJOYMENT										
Concessions Management	0.3	\$14,237	\$3,871	\$15	\$320	\$0	0.1	\$4,207	(0.3)	(\$10,030)
Education	2.0	\$136,809	\$5,701	\$31	\$0	\$0	0.1	\$5,732	(1.9)	(\$131,077)
Fee Collection	3.2	\$106,546	\$51,290	\$687	\$1,792	\$68,247	3.0	\$122,017	(0.2)	\$15,470
Interpretation	1.6	\$112,792	\$48,822	\$2,807	\$0	-\$88	0.7	\$51,541	(0.9)	(\$61,250)
VEE Management and Administration	1.6	\$146,962	\$102,444	-\$4,853	\$1,366	\$3,562	1.7	\$102,519	0.1	(\$44,443)
Visitor Center Operations	9.3	\$344,287	\$232,217	\$2,025	\$0	\$0	4.4	\$234,242	(4.9)	(\$110,045)
Visitor Safety Services	8.1	\$561,730	\$403,725	\$14,975	\$433	\$510	5.2	\$419,644	(2.8)	(\$142,086)
Visitor Use Services	0.2	\$5,707	\$5,879	\$40	\$0	\$0	0.1	\$5,919	(0.0)	\$212
Subtotal	26.2	\$1,429,070	\$853,950	\$15,727	\$3,912	\$72,232	15.3	\$945,821	(10.8)	(\$483,249)
FACILITY OPERATIONS										
Campgrounds Operations	2.7	\$152,503	\$103,179	\$29,393	\$143	\$10,859	2.4	\$143,575	(0.3)	(\$8,927)
Buildings Operations	1.5	\$67,026	\$47,274	\$3,215	\$0	\$1,232	1.0	\$51,721	(0.4)	(\$15,305)
Grounds Operations	1.8	\$81,182	\$40,235	\$8,325	\$0	\$5,461	1.0	\$54,020	(0.8)	(\$27,161)
Janitorial Operations	1.4	\$68,920	\$35,013	\$5,114	\$11	\$0	0.6	\$40,139	(0.8)	(\$28,781)
Facility Operations Management and Administration	2.2	\$159,408	\$125,448	-\$1,779	-\$344	\$2,024	2.2	\$125,349	(0.0)	(\$34,059)
Roads Operations	2.4	\$151,169	\$64,189	\$46,835	\$129	\$73	2.4	\$111,226	0.0	(\$39,943)
Trails Operations	7.0	\$292,837	\$35,922	\$13,686	\$1,338	\$127	1.1	\$51,073	(5.9)	(\$241,763)
Transportation Systems and Fleet Operations	0.1	\$56,362	\$40,293	\$19	\$0	\$0	0.1	\$40,312	0.0	(\$16,050)
Utilities Operations	1.6	\$178,103	\$155,468	\$1,029	\$1,182	\$1,558	1.3	\$159,237	(0.4)	(\$18,866)
Subtotal	20.6	\$1,207,509	\$647,021	\$105,838	\$2,460	\$21,334	12.0	\$776,652	(8.6)	(\$430,857)
MAINTENANCE										
Buildings Maintenance	1.3	\$71,491	\$28,470	\$53	\$3,907	\$136	0.4	\$32,567	(0.8)	(\$38,924)
Maintenance Management and Administration	2.9	\$207,830	\$95,161	-\$3,182	-\$874	\$5,301	2.4	\$96,407	(0.5)	(\$111,423)
Roads Maintenance	1.7	\$100,140	\$67,782	\$21,463	\$487	\$31	1.7	\$89,763	0.0	(\$10,377)
Trails Maintenance	5.6	\$305,726	\$41,178	\$89,161	\$14,842	\$20,619	2.6	\$165,800	(3.0)	(\$139,926)
Transportation Systems and Fleet Maintenance	1.4	\$120,187	\$82,828	\$1,018	\$0	\$0	1.0	\$83,846	(0.4)	(\$36,342)
Utilities Maintenance	1.7	\$143,445	\$91,968	\$2,053	\$25	\$651	1.4	\$94,697	(0.3)	(\$48,749)
Subtotal	14.6	\$948,820	\$407,387	\$110,566	\$18,388	\$26,738	9.5	\$563,079	(5.1)	(\$385,741)
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION										
Communications	3.5	\$174,266	\$70,657	\$3,138	\$0	\$0	1.0	\$73,795	(2.5)	(\$100,471)
External Affairs	0.6	\$69,374	\$66,982	\$12	\$0	\$0	0.6	\$66,994	0.0	(\$2,379)
Financial Management	1.6	\$116,125	\$104,383	\$1,728	\$0	\$0	1.5	\$106,111	(0.0)	(\$10,014)
General Administration	2.7	\$159,862	\$114,653	\$1,561	\$0	\$0	2.0	\$116,214	(0.6)	(\$43,648)
General Management	2.9	\$215,380	\$139,664	-\$3,097	-\$544	\$2,178	1.9	\$138,201	(1.0)	(\$77,179)
Parkwide Safety	0.3	\$41,203	\$18,805	\$68	\$0	\$0	0.2	\$18,873	(0.1)	(\$22,330)
Partnerships	0.9	\$90,221	\$73,951	\$1,030	\$0	\$0	0.8	\$74,982	(0.1)	(\$15,239)
Planning	1.0	\$99,813	\$97,564	\$94	\$108	\$0	1.0	\$97,766	0.0	(\$2,047)
Subtotal	13.4	\$966,244	\$686,660	\$4,534	-\$436	\$2,178	9.0	\$692,936	(4.4)	(\$273,308)
Grand Total	96.5	\$5,928,561	\$3,271,168	\$297,113	\$24,501	\$124,590	56.5	\$3,717,372	(40.0)	(\$2,211,189)

This financial statement has been prepared from the books and records of the National Park Service in accordance with NPS accounting policies. The resources available reflect the total operations and maintenance expenses incurred by the park during the last complete fiscal year. The resources required represent the funding needed to operate the park while fully meeting operational standards as defined in business plan supporting documentation. Program requirements are presented as a five-year planning tool based on salary and wage tables from the same fiscal year, given current resource inventories, and the current park infrastructure. Changes resulting from one-time projects and capital improvements (e.g. investments) may have a resulting impact on the operational requirements presented.

The value of donated materials and in-kind services is not included as an available resource in the financial summary because these materials and services are not only used for required operations. See page 26 for information on the valuation of work performed by volunteers.

The financial statement presents the available and required resources for the operational activities of the park only. Investment expenditures for capital improvements or other one-time projects are not accounted for in this statement. For information on the park's investment expenditures, see page 28.

Due to a change in close out accounting practices that occurred service-wide in 2004, the financial statement understates the actual dollar amount available to Big South Fork in FY2004 by approximately \$128,000. Consequently, the park's deficit is overstated by this amount. A portion of the false deficit appears in the mgmt and admin program areas under each functional area.

Volunteer Analysis



Volunteers help the park host an annual Spring Planting Festival.



The Trails program benefits greatly from volunteer contributions.

The park manages a Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) program designed to increase public interest and involvement in the park. In 2004, 244 individuals contributed 7,562 volunteer hours to Big South Fork, equivalent to 3.6 FTE for the fiscal year. Park volunteers come from the surrounding region and are referred to the park through environmental clubs, outdoor organizations, and performing arts groups. Interagency agreements and local non-profit organizations, especially the Friends of the Big South Fork, contribute significant volunteer support.

In 2004, the net benefit to the park from volunteers was estimated to be \$127,000, using the National Park Service average of \$17.19 per volunteer hour, and subtracting out direct costs to the VIP program of uniforms, transportation, and housing provided to qualified volunteers. Additional funds for supplies and training time is contributed by each division managing volunteers. These expenditures are not included in this National Park Service standard calculation.

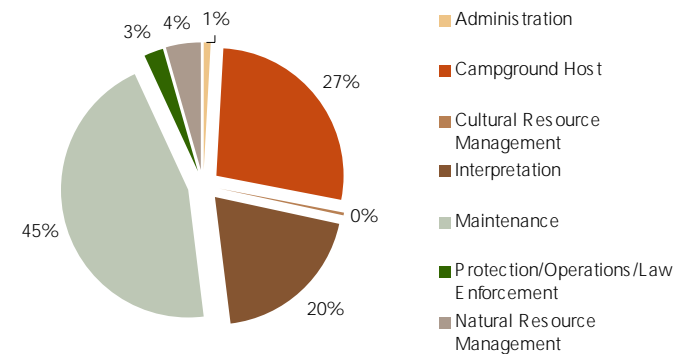
Maintenance: The largest portion of volunteer time (45%) was spent in trails maintenance. Student Conservation Association (SCA) volunteers and several equine groups are particularly involved in this activity. In 2004, 840 of these 3,397 hours were spent rehabilitating the Alum Ford Primitive Campground.

Campgrounds: Campground hosts in the Bandy Creek and Blue Heron campgrounds contributed 2,056 hours living in the campground, ensuring compliance, and providing information to visitors.

Interpretation: Interpretative Services has a number of dedicated volunteers providing a total of 1,504 hours in FY2004. Volunteers in this capacity have a high degree

of local knowledge and are a critical component of special events in the park.

2004 Volunteer Hours by Category



Resources and Visitor Protection: The Natural and Cultural Resources division recorded 412 volunteer hours involving archaeological, curatorial and biological assistance including a bird survey by a university professor. An additional 193 volunteer hours went toward law enforcement and resource protection. These volunteers assisted primarily with search and rescue, although the services contributed by the Big South Fork Bicycle Club, who assist with trails patrols, are also included in this category.

Volunteers make it possible for Big South Fork to provide regular educational programs for school groups and annual park special events. Educational traditions such as the Spring Planting Festival and the Haunting in the Hills Storytelling Festival depend on the generosity of these volunteers.

Government Performance and Results Act

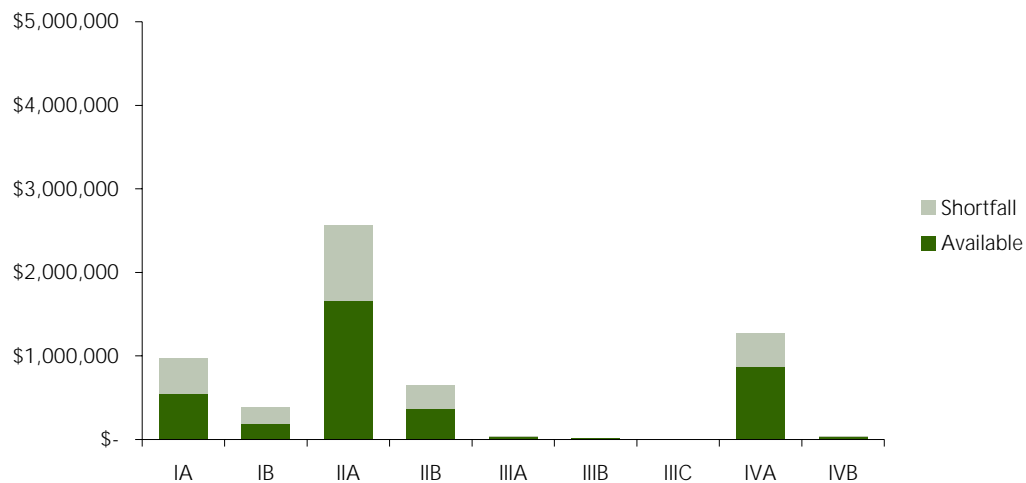
Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 to enforce a greater degree of accountability for mission accomplishment, and to stimulate efficient, effective practices in federal agencies. GPRA mandates federal agencies to define performance goals and track their ability to meet these goals. With a focus on outcomes rather than efforts, GPRA provides a tool for tracking the effectiveness of spending within particular programs. This in turn facilitates management decisions regarding optimal allocation of park funding. The following chart shows how Big South Fork distributes its resources across the four GPRA goals during FY2004:

- Goals I and II: The National Park Service's dual mission to preserve resources and provide for visitor enjoyment is accounted for by GPRA goal categories I and II. The majority of Big South Fork's efforts, approximately 74%, were dedicated to resource

preservation and public enjoyment activities. These programs are central to fulfilling the park's mission and require further resources; fully 82% of the funding shortfall is attributed to Goals I and II.

- Goal III: This goal focuses on resource preservation partnerships, an area of interest to Big South Fork but not one to which a large amount of operating funds is dedicated.
- Goal IV: Big South Fork continually strives to increase its organizational effectiveness, thereby improving the park's ability to achieve its mission. In FY2004, Big South Fork spent approximately 25% of its budget on improving its everyday management practices and processes, as well as its information technology systems.

FY04 Expenditures by GPRA Goal



GPRA Mission Goals

I. Preserve Park Resources

- Natural and Cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.
- The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

II. Provide for the Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience of Parks

- Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.
- Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

III. Strengthen and Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources and Enhance Recreational Opportunities Managed by Partners

- Natural and cultural resources are conserved through formal partnership programs.
- Through partnerships with other federal, state, and local agencies and nonprofit organizations, a nationwide system of parks, open space, rivers and trails provides educational, recreational, and conservation benefits for the American people.
- Assisted through federal funds and programs, the protection of recreational opportunities is achieved through formal mechanisms to ensure continued access for public recreational use.

IV. Ensure Organizational Effectiveness

- The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.
- The National Park Service increases its managerial resources through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Funded Investments



Animal proof trash containers protect both visitors and wildlife.

Big South Fork engaged in several one-time investment projects in FY2004, totaling \$600,000 in expenditures.

Big South Fork engaged in several one-time investment projects in FY2004, totaling \$600,000 in expenditures. These investments are critically important in order to improve resource protection, visitor services and safety, and park infrastructure. Some of the most significant projects are summarized below. Total expenditure amounts reflect FY2004 spending only, however, several of the listed projects are multi-year efforts.

Rehabilitate 20 Miles of North White Oak Loop Trail

With an estimated 140,000 users each year, trail maintenance was needed on the North White Oak Loop trail to remove hazardous vegetation, perform tread and drainage repair, and replace and repair signs. The project also included repair of horse bridges and other trail structures. In addition to decreased visitor accidents, rehabilitation of the trail reduces erosion, thereby protecting several threatened and endangered species, including rare species of freshwater mussels.

Total expenditure: \$240,000

Rehabilitate 27 Miles of Heavy Visitor Use Gravel Roads

Heavy use and weathering had resulted in the loss of gravel on a 27 mile stretch of roads. This project involved the procurement and placement of gravel on the roads by day labor crews. Many portions of this 27 mile section had not received gravel since 1996, and therefore had very little left to grade. The lack of material resulted in increased potholes and ruts, which hold water and lead to larger structural issues. This project allowed for better visitor access and visitor safety. Furthermore, because visitors frequently drove off this section of designated road to avoid potholes, rehabilitation also achieved better resource protection.

Total expenditure: \$120,000

Catalog Museum Backlog Archival Collections

Many archival materials collected before 1987 have not been catalogued or indexed. Through cataloguing these materials, the park will be better able to interpret these materials and utilize them for increased resource protection. This multi-year project will improve access to these objects by park staff and enable a greater understanding of the park's resources.

Total expenditure: \$53,000

Upgrade Electrical System at Bandy Creek Campground

Improving the electrical service at 98 campsites increased visitor safety and visitor experience at the most popular campground in the park. Park staff worked closely with a local utility company in order to plan and complete the re-wiring of the entire campground from the primary transformer to the end service. With an increasing number of campers and increasing electrical needs, the upgrade to the campground's electrical system will provide visitors with the quality experience they expect when visiting Big South Fork.

Total expenditure: \$31,000

Replace Conventional Trash Cans with Animal Proof Containers

Replacing conventional trash cans with animal proof containers allows for the reduction in human-animal incidents within the park, reduction of litter and unsightly debris at park facilities and backcountry areas, and prevention of employee injuries associated with heavy lifting of conventional trash containers. This project is estimated to save the park approximately \$10,000 per year of employee time in picking up refuse scattered by visitors and animals.

Total Expenditure: \$30,000

Build New Tennessee Fire Cache for Wildland Fire Response

A 4,000 square foot building in the Tennessee portion of the park was constructed to provide suitable storage for the equipment and supplies associated with wildland fire response. Given the rugged terrain and intersecting gorge, it is critical to assess wildland fires quickly, before they spread to difficult to access regions of the park. The new building replaced the previous structure which was a shared facility for fire fighting, EMS, SAR, and river rescue equipment. A more spacious and less crowded facility allows for quicker responses to emergencies in the park. This project began in FY2003 and is expected to be completed in FY2005.

Total Expenditure: \$29,000

Replace Maintenance Pickup Truck

The new pickup truck replaced the primary maintenance vehicle in the Kentucky district of Big South Fork. The Kentucky district is approximately 35 miles from the Tennessee maintenance headquarters, thus making it imperative to have dependable transportation in the Kentucky region. The vehicle that was replaced had approximately 150,000 miles. The new vehicle is safer and more reliable than the older vehicle, leading to increased productivity.

Total expenditure: \$25,000

Gather Ethnographies to Preserve and Interpret Local History

In the gathering process for the ethnographic history, citizens between the ages of 75 and 95 years of age were interviewed in order to acquire and record knowledge of local history. The 15 individuals interviewed possessed information relating to the park's eligible historic structures and cultural landscapes, as well as knowledge of the natural environment as they knew it 50 to 75 years ago. By collecting photographs along with the oral histories, Big South Fork is better able to interpret,

preserve, and maintain the park's cultural resources with greater accuracy and historical validity.

Total expenditure: \$23,000

Improve Museum Collection Storage

This project aided the improvement of the park's current curatorial storage area. Improving the curatorial space allows for proper sanitary storage of curatorial objects and a reduction in safety hazards due to better mobility in the area. This project will be completed in two phases, the first of which was completed in FY2004.

Total expenditure: \$22,000

Install Door Handles and Tactile Signage to Meet ADA Standards

The replacement of door handles and tactile signage allows for compliance with Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards at both Big South Fork and Obed Wild and Scenic River.

Total expenditure: \$16,000

Survey Archaeological Cliffline

With numerous archaeological sites located along the cliff lines at Big South Fork, it is important to inventory and monitor a representative sample of sites each year. This task allows Big South Fork to meet its legislative mandate to protect its archaeological resources. This is an ongoing effort at the park that has received funding for years prior to FY2004.

Total expenditure: \$15,000

“Greening” the Big South Fork Fleet

As part of its ongoing efforts to improve the “greenness” of its operations, Big South Fork has aggressively pursued a move to clean, alternative fuel sources for its vehicle fleet. In FY2004, the park transitioned all of its diesel vehicles to biodiesel. The park now operates 18 on- and off-road pieces of equipment with the fuel.

In FY2003 the park purchased a compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicle and in FY2004 a CNG fueling station was installed at the park's East Rim Maintenance Complex. The CNG vehicle is now being used to haul trash from campgrounds. The park is also examining the possibility of using a splash mix of ethanol with regular unleaded gasoline in the rest of the park's vehicle fleet.

Priorities & Strategies

Operations & Maintenance Priorities



Additional law enforcement rangers are needed to enhance visitor safety and resource protection.



Increased staffing is required to keep trails safe for visitor enjoyment.

Operations and Maintenance (O&M) includes activities required to carry out everyday park operations. The Summary Financial Statement identifies challenges and funding needs across programs at Big South Fork. In this section, the park has identified its top priorities. Accompanying each priority is an estimated cost and the number of fulltime equivalents (FTE) that are required to meet each need. The total cost of implementing these priorities is estimated to be \$2.0 million, which represents 90% of the park's \$2.2 million shortfall.

Increase Trails Staffing

With approximately 400 miles of trails, Big South Fork is a trails intensive park that requires constant upkeep and maintenance to meet different user groups' expectations. The geographic boundaries of the park pose a logistical problem for the few employees dedicated to trails rehabilitation. Additional FTE are required to assist with tasks such as hazard tree removal, drainage structure cleaning and repair, tread repair, and sign replacement. The park's General Management Plan (GMP) calls for the creation of an additional 50 miles of trail. Additional staff would assist with the new construction and preservation of the already existing trail system.

Total cost: \$382,000 (includes 8.9 FTE)

Increase Maintenance and Facility Operations Staffing and Funding (excludes trails)

The maintenance division experiences significant challenges in meeting day-to-day upkeep of the park's assets. Due to insufficient resources, employees spend time between different programs (i.e., buildings, roads, grounds) which allows tasks to be completed at a minimum level, but not without consequence. As resources are frequently spread too thin, the park is unable to be proactive in its maintenance efforts. Additional FTE are required to help

most programs, particularly buildings, grounds and janitorial operations.

Total cost: \$374,000 (includes 4.8 FTE)

Increase Interpretation Division Staffing

Currently, interpretive rangers spend the majority of their time staffing visitor centers. While this is an important function, this role impacts the amount of time they have to spend on interpretive programs. Funding will allow for these experienced rangers to spend more time developing evening programs, children's programs, and interpretive talks by placing more appropriate staff in the existing visitor centers and the three new gateway visitor locations listed in the GMP. Funding would also support hiring an Education Specialist to develop a curriculum-based program for schools, provide educational outreach, and offer teacher support. Offering additional educational and interpretive services allows visitors and students to better understand, appreciate, and ultimately protect Big South Fork's resources.

Total Cost: \$302,000 (includes 7.7 FTE)

Enhance Natural Resources Program

Support and staffing of the Natural Resources program at Big South Fork have not kept pace with increasing pressures on the park's natural resources. Pressures include water quality reduction, exotic pest invasion, park boundary development, and resource extraction within the Big South Fork watershed. Funding is needed to implement recovery plans for federally listed species, control and monitor exotic plant populations, develop and implement a water resource program, develop a backcountry management program, and implement a number of existing resource management plans.

Total cost: \$275,000 (includes 4.3 FTE)

Improve Visitor Safety and Security and Upgrade Dispatch Services

Big South Fork's diverse natural and cultural resources, rugged terrain, and multiple uses present unique safety issues for park staff. Over the last ten years Big South Fork has gained over 10,000 acres of new land. Over the same time period, the number of commissioned rangers has been reduced by 40%. The reduction has led to more resource violations, an increase in crimes against visitors, and slower response times. Complicating matters, rangers conduct patrols with no standard dispatch system. Additional rangers and upgraded dispatch capabilities would help reverse these trends.

Total cost: \$212,000 (includes 4.8 FTE)

Support Cultural Resource Programs

The Big South Fork museum collection includes over 600,000 artifacts, objects, and ethnographic materials. All of these objects are currently being managed as a collateral duty of a single technician. Staffing deficiencies prevent the collection from being managed to meet accepted standards for preservation. In addition, funding is required to support ongoing stabilization and preservation of historic and engineering structures and other culturally significant resources.

Total cost: \$124,000 (includes 2.3 FTE)

Develop Oil and Gas Program

Big South Fork contains over 300 oil and gas sites, the largest concentration in any National Park Service unit. Deteriorating oil collection lines, lack of security, and lack of maintenance on gas well heads all create potential hazards. Abandoned wells can cause detrimental environmental impacts affecting soils, water, plants, and animals. The park is committed to developing a comprehensive minerals management program, but limited resources have hampered progress. An oil and gas program manager as well as technician support is needed.

Total cost: \$111,000 (includes 2.0 FTE)

Increase Archaeological Support

Big South Fork is home to more archaeological sites than the rest of the parks in the Southeast Region of the National Park Service combined. The majority of the sites remain to be inventoried. The park currently employs one archaeologist. Due to the volume of sites in the park, additional staff is required to identify those most vulnerable and help develop and implement preservation strategies.

Total cost: \$93,000 (includes 1.4 FTE)

Enhance Fire Management Program

Big South Fork has recently begun prescribed burning to control the fire danger within the park's boundaries. As this program becomes more complex, the need for a Fire Management Officer (FMO) increases. The FMO position would work primarily on Big South Fork needs, but would likely spend time supporting other parks in the region. Currently, the Chief Law Enforcement Ranger manages the fire program. The FMO would assume a leadership role in all fire management responsibilities.

Total cost: \$48,500 (includes 0.8 FTE)

Staff Entrepreneurial Government Position

Currently, responsibilities for managing concessions and other commercial aspects of the park are assigned as a collateral duty in the Visitor Protection division. This limits the time and effort expended in this specialized area resulting in lower levels of visitor service and lost fee generation opportunities. Addition of an individual with a business background would provide the skills and attention necessary to implement an effective commercial services program. The revenue and fee programs would be operated much like a business with greater attention focused on the park's pricing, accounting, spending, and reporting.

Total cost: \$44,000 (includes 0.7 FTE)



Enhancing the fire management program is a top priority at the park.



Maintenance staff has experienced an increase in office duties.

Investment Priorities



Replacing the park's radio system is a high priority.



The park's museum collections storage space is inadequate.

Investments are one-time expenditures that improve park infrastructure or increase the intellectual capital of the park. Currently, Big South Fork has prepared over 130 requests for National Park Service investment funding, with a total need of nearly \$17.9 million. Big South Fork has identified the following projects as its top investment needs.

Complete Survey and Demarcation of Park Boundary and Land Acquisition of Privately Owned Properties

The documentation of the park's boundary was incomplete at the time management responsibilities were transferred from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the National Park Service in 1990. The work needed includes the surveying and concrete demarcation of approximately 44 miles of boundary and 20 cemeteries. This project would be accomplished over three phases of 75,000 feet per year. Without adequate boundary delineation, coal, oil, timber, and gas encroachments could escalate and jurisdictional disputes could occur. Furthermore, the park needs to complete land acquisition of privately owned properties within the park's boundary.

Required investment: \$20,400,000

Perform Remediation Resulting from Past Mineral Extraction and Exploration

Unplugged, abandoned, and leaking oil and gas wells as well as acid mine drainage from abandoned coal mines are delivering contaminants to park waters. Sensitive natural habitats, threatened and endangered species, and visitor safety are being negatively impacted. Although most of the 120 abandoned mine openings have been closed, the closures require monitoring and maintenance to prevent visitor hazards. Actions needed include reclaiming disturbed areas, repairing leaking wellheads, building security gates, plugging abandoned or unused wells, and treating acid mine drainage.

Required investment: \$4,400,000 - \$6,400,000

Ensure Adequate Storage of Park Collection

The museum collections at Big South Fork include approximately 600,000 archaeological, historic, ethnographic, botanical, paleontological, archival, and geologic objects: 445,000 stored on site and 154,000 on loan. The current collection storage space meets 45% of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for proper preservation and management of the collection. The park can no longer modify the existing storage structure. A plan is needed to provide for storage and upkeep that assures both the long term survival and integrity of the collection as well as encourages its use for both academic research and visitor education and enjoyment.

Required investment: \$2,425,000

Develop Park Planning Documents

During the completion of the General Management Plan (GMP), which will guide the management of the park for the next 15 to 20 years, a need was recognized for many park planning documents. These plans consist partially of a backcountry resources management plan, a comprehensive interpretive plan, a pest management plan for Big South Fork facilities and cultural buildings, museum collections emergency preparedness and fire protection plans, and a watershed management plan. These plans are critical for management to better understand the park's resources and challenges.

Required investment: \$900,000

Implement Trails Management Plan in accordance with the GMP

The park's GMP described a complex trails management plan that will include the building of new trails, as well as the rehabilitation and routine maintenance of existing trails. It has been recognized that while the park has many miles of trails, there are certain gaps that exist in what could be a more

integrated trail system offering a better visitor experience. The implementation of the plan would fill these gaps, such as building a connector trail linking the networks surrounding the Station Camp and Bear Creek horse camps and the completion of the John Muir Trail. Implementation of the trails management plan is an undertaking which will require a significant investment.

Required investment: \$670,000

Replace Radio System

Due to a National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) mandate, the park must replace wideband analog radio equipment with narrowband digital radio equipment. Big South Fork is a deep, river gorge park with many areas that are too remote for wireless phone communications. The radio system is currently used heavily by law enforcement rangers, but is also used daily by each division for administrative, logistical, and employee safety issues. A major effort must be conducted to provide Big South Fork with an adequate radio system to replace the current system.

Required investment: \$600,000

Complete Basic Natural Resources Inventory

As a relatively new park, the type and distribution of species contained within Big South Fork remains to be determined. Species information is critical for resource protection, planning, and decision making. Ten of twelve needed initial baseline natural resource inventories are in the process of being completed and the last two inventories, soils and geology, are still outstanding. It is expected that many new species will continue to be found as a monitoring program is implemented and future resource studies occur. As an example, the present vascular plant list of 696 species is likely to double when inventories are complete.

Required investment: \$300,000 - \$500,000

Complete Oil and Gas Management Plan

Big South Fork contains over 300 existing oil and gas sites and approximately 20,000 acres of privately held minerals. Oil and gas activities must be managed according to federal regulations for the National Park Service. Currently, there is

no oil and gas management planning document to guide oil and gas activities. A project is needed to compile and consolidate existing information on private mineral ownership and property rights and federal responsibilities; conduct internal and public scoping sessions to outline issues related to oil and gas; and prepare an environmental impact statement and the Oil and Gas Management Plan.

Required investment: \$380,000

Complete Archaeological Inventory and Overview and Assessment Report

The 1,335 documented archeological sites at Big South Fork represent only 20% of the estimated total within the park. Unidentified sites go unmonitored and in many instances are destroyed. The park must complete a site inventory for the rockshelter sites in jeopardy. Also, from 1990 to 1995 the park spent over \$450,000 on archaeological overview and assessment fieldwork. The final step in the project, compiling the information together into an Overview and Assessment Report for use in protecting the archeological resources in the park and educating visitors about the prehistory of the park, needs to be completed.

Required investment: \$165,000

Complete Cultural Resource Inventory

There are 14 historic structures remaining at Big South Fork. Only two of these have had Inventory and Condition Assessment (ICAP) evaluations performed for them. Historic structure assessments need to be performed for the remaining structures in order to meet National Register legislation, National Park Service goals, and compliance requirements. Three significant Cultural Landscapes need to be evaluated for listing on the National Register. Finally, an Administrative History documenting the creation and management of the park needs to be completed.

Required investment: \$150,000



Basic natural resource inventories are needed to protect the park's many species of plants and animals.



Historic structure assessments need to be completed in order to meet National Park Service goals.

Strategies for Reducing Costs



The Bandy Creek Fee Collection Kiosk.



The Business Plan Consultants were supported by a partnership between the Student Conservation Association and the National Park Service.

In order to meet its needs with limited funds, Big South Fork actively pursues opportunities to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency. The following list includes several areas where the park has identified the potential for additional cost reductions.

Consolidate Fee Collection Activities

The visitor center at Bandy Creek is currently staffed by highly experienced interpretive rangers. Less than one-half of a mile away, visitor use assistants work at the Bandy Creek kiosk collecting campground and other special use fees and answering visitor questions. Consolidation of these two visitor contact locations into a single location at the existing Bandy Creek visitor center offers the opportunity to reduce the demand on staff time without sacrificing visitor satisfaction.

Closure of the Bandy Creek kiosk involves little upfront investment and has the potential for significant benefits. Partially staffing the visitor center with visitor use assistants currently working in the kiosk will allow interpreters more opportunities to enter the field. Under this proposal, all fee activities at Bandy Creek will be centered in the existing Bandy Creek visitor center, thus enhancing customer convenience by providing “one stop shopping,” increasing overall visitation of the facility, and creating the possibility for extended hours of operation. After an initial investment to retrofit the visitor center to accommodate kiosk activities, combining the two entities will result in annual cost savings by decreasing the overall demand for staff and reducing utility and maintenance costs associated with operating two separate facilities.
Estimated benefit: \$19,500 per year

Enhance Volunteer Programs

As discussed on the Volunteer Analysis page, Big South Fork relies heavily on volunteers to provide much needed assistance in a number of divisions. Continuation and enhancement of existing volunteer programs, such as the campground host and the Big South Fork Bicycle Club programs, will ensure that these contributions continue into the future and reduce the dependency on hiring new park staff to meet programmatic needs. An area for possible expansion of the volunteer program is staffing of new gateway community visitor centers. Plans are underway to place park personnel in each of three new visitor facilities located at major park access routes. Use of volunteers to staff these centers can help meet some or all of this need.

Estimated benefit: \$29,500-\$117,000 per year

Conserve Energy

In FY2004, Big South Fork spent over \$125,000 on water and utility bills. An investigation into current park energy use and available reduction opportunities is needed to reduce these costs, improve energy-use efficiency, and protect the environment. An energy audit will enable the park to identify simple, low-cost steps to begin conservation. For example, converting to waterless urinals at the campgrounds has the potential to reduce water bills by 2% to 4%. Other steps, including conversion to tankless water heaters at the campgrounds, use of programmable thermostats in main administrative buildings, and putting computers into low-power sleep mode during periods of inactivity, are relatively simple to implement and cost-effective.

Estimated benefit: \$8,000 per year

Utilize a Data Entry Intern

Currently, experienced and tenured employees spend significant amounts of time performing data entry. The maintenance division experiences challenges in balancing day-to-day operations with National Park Service specific computer applications. Employees who have never been trained to use computers are taking valuable time out of their days to input information regarding condition assessments.

These are motivated “can-do people” whose time would be best served in the field. It is possible that a dedicated computer intern could reduce the amount of time allocated to administration by field personnel. Through utilizing a computer intern the maintenance employees will be able to help further fulfill the park's mission involving recreational opportunities for visitors. This will lead to great visitor enjoyment and reduce potential future costs for backlogged maintenance projects. The park should explore partnering with local schools or other institutions to leverage computer skilled interns.
Estimated benefit: \$15,000 per year



Create Adopt-A-Trail Program

Volunteers already make a substantial contribution at Big South Fork, but there is an opportunity to increase and improve the use of this resource. The park contains almost 400 miles of hiking, equestrian, mountain biking, and multi-use trails. While the park staff works diligently to maintain the trails system, many still need attention. An Adopt-A-Trail effort will allow the park to be proactive in trails maintenance. Volunteer groups could “adopt” a portion of a trail and/or boundary system, either as individuals or as groups. Duties such as minor trail maintenance, litter patrol, and sign inventory can be accomplished by these volunteers. Furthermore, implementation of this program will further support necessary actions as described in the park's recently completed General Management Plan (GMP). The program will require an annual training session designed to prepare volunteers for working safely in the backcountry.

Estimated benefit: \$15,000 per year

Explore New Opportunities to Share Resources

The Great Smoky Mountains Fire Effects Monitoring Team and the Appalachian Highland Inventory and Monitoring Network are two examples of professional resources that Big South Fork shares with other parks in the region. Collectively, the park saved over \$440,000 from participating in such collaborations in FY2004. The park should explore additional opportunities to share resources with both state and national parks and state and federal agencies. For example, the park currently has a need for specialist personnel in contracting, concessions and fee management, and fire management. Utilizing shared regional resources rather than hiring full-time personnel devoted to Big South Fork can reduce personnel costs and enhance partnerships.

Estimated benefit: \$66,000 per year

The NPS Scorecard

The NPS Washington Office has recently developed a new strategic tool to assist NPS managers in the evaluation and prioritization of unit funding requests. This tool, the NPS Scorecard, is designed to provide information on unit performance and efficiency across a variety of indicators. This information is collected in a centralized database and is designed to be used by Regional and Washington leadership as they prioritize these funding requests. The performance and efficiency measures found in the Scorecard include indicators such as the visitor contact rate (number of visitor contacts per recreational visit), the cost of collection rate (amount spent to collect each dollar in entrance fees), the percent of invasive plant species contained, and dozens of other criteria across a broad spectrum of park operational areas. Park units can be compared to one another individually, to all parks within a given Region, or to parks of similar budget size or business model.

The Scorecard tool is currently being piloted at NPS Regional Offices and selected park units nationwide in an effort to ground truth the Scorecard measures and validate existing data. Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area is actively working with NPS leadership and the Scorecard Working Group to provide feedback on performance and efficiency measures, and will be using the tool once it is available to evaluate its OFS funding requests for FY2008.

Strategies for Increasing Non-Appropriated Funding



Horse stables are one of the popular services offered by the park's concessionaires.

Big South Fork seeks new and innovative ways to increase revenue to the park in order to supplement insufficient base funding. The park raised roughly \$200,000 in revenue in FY2004. Opportunities are available to the park to increase this amount. Several of these options are discussed below.

Update Concessionaire Contracts

The five concessions operations at Big South Fork provide a number of services to enhance visitor experience at the park. They are also an important source of revenue. For several years, a number of the concessionaires have operated under one-year, fixed-fee contracts. The park is currently in the process of updating these agreements to be percentage-of-gross arrangements and locking in five- to six-year commitments. Completion of this process will both increase park revenue and improve collaboration between the park and its long-term concessionaires as they both work to increase visitation and visitor satisfaction.

Estimated benefit: \$7,500 per year

Implement Recreation Based User Fees

The implementation of an equipment based recreational fee, in accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), would increase revenue for the park. Currently, no fee is assessed on the many different user groups of the park. While an entrance fee would be difficult to implement due to the large number of entry points, the implementation of a user fee would be more realistic. Comparability studies have been performed within the larger southeastern geographic area and have determined equitable fee amounts. Prior to implementation, a public relations program would need to be developed and implemented to explain and gain support for the new fees. This campaign would be

focused on the benefits that users will realize as a result of fees (i.e., trail maintenance).

Estimated benefit: \$170,000 per year

Examine Campground Fees

The camping facilities at Big South Fork are some of the finest in the southern Tennessee/northern Kentucky region. The campgrounds at Bandy Creek and Blue Heron provide the park with a steady revenue stream and consistently high marks with visitors. In recent years, fees at these locations have remained fixed while upkeep costs have risen. The park is in need of a thorough review of all campground-related fees.

Three specific fee areas the park should examine include showers, camping, and picnic shelters. Currently, hot showers are available free of charge to all campers at both Bandy Creek and Blue Heron campgrounds. Installation of modestly priced, coin-operated showers has the potential to raise revenues and reduce both water consumption and utility expenses. Camping fees at some sites in the park have not changed since the late 1990's. Selectively increasing these fees will bring the park back in-line with comparable camping options in the area and help defray the rising costs of campground maintenance. The F Loop picnic shelter is a missed opportunity. Upgrading the seldom-used shelter with water and electric will increase demand for and enjoyment of the site.

Estimated benefit: \$44,000 per year



Kayakers are one of the park's many user groups.

Improve Pool Operations

The pool at Bandy Creek is one of the few public National Park Service operated pools in the country. It is highly popular with both local community members as well as campers staying at the nearby Bandy Creek campsites. Despite its popularity, the pool operates at an annual loss to the park. Shifting the fee structure to an Adult/Child system from the current Individual/Family system and exploring shifting hours of operation to cover only the most popular parts of the day can increase revenues and reduce costs, while minimizing any negative impacts to park visitors.

Estimated benefit: \$7,000 per year



Big South Fork is home to one of the only public swimming pools in the National Park Service.

Enhance Friends Group Partnership

The Friends of the Big South Fork play an important role with fundraising and community projects each year. While Big South Fork currently has donation boxes in the two main visitor centers, a more aggressive approach to location and design of donation boxes could generate increased revenue for the park. Parking lots at overlooks, popular trailheads, heavy visitor use locations, and gateway visitor centers should be evaluated for this purpose. Furthermore, the park should explore updating the “wish list” of park needs to reflect the challenges described in the recently completed GMP. The wish list will allow prospective donors the opportunity to purchase equipment, supplies or services directly related to the park or dedicate resources for preferred areas they would particularly like to see assisted. Finally, an increase in online donation capabilities could enhance revenues for the park.

Estimated benefit: \$2,000 per year



Partnerships are critical to Big South Fork.

Additional Information



Blue Heron visitors ride to the community on the Big South Fork Scenic Railway.

Blue Heron Mining Community

Located in the Kentucky portion of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Blue Heron, or Mine 18, is an abandoned coal-mining town. Once an integral part of the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company, the Blue Heron mines, named after a type of coal, operated from 1937 until 1962. During this twenty-five year period, thousands of people lived, worked, and even died in the isolated community on the banks of the Big South Fork River.

Following the closure of the mines in the 1960s, the people of Blue Heron left their small town on the river to seek new opportunities. The deserted town they left behind began to recede back into nature. In only a few years, the town and the way of life it fostered were in danger of being forgotten. However, recognizing its value as an important reminder of the area's cultural heritage, Congress called for the preservation of Blue Heron as part of the creation of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in 1974. The park's enabling legislation explicitly requires the “restoration of the Blue Heron Mining Community in a manner which will preserve and enhance the historical integrity of the community and will contribute to the public's understanding and enjoyment of its historical value.”

Interpreting the old mining town of Blue Heron posed an interesting challenge to its planners. How does one tell the story of a ghost town when no complete physical or written records remain? The Stearns Coal and Lumber Company abandoned Blue Heron in 1962, at which time they either moved existing buildings to other mining towns or allowed them to lapse into decay. Most of what is known about life at Blue Heron has been handed down solely by oral history.

The solution was to restore the community as an open-air museum by erecting new structures, open metal shells of buildings, referred to as “ghost structures.” Each ghost structure was constructed as close as possible to the original size, location, and orientation of the building as it once stood at Blue Heron.

In order to bring Blue Heron to life for park visitors, a project to record the voices and stories of the former residents of Mine 18 was undertaken. Each ghost structure at Blue Heron is equipped to share these tales of life in a remote company mining town during the 1940's and 1950's. The stories, which include recollections on the life of women in the town, the church, the school, courtship and marriage, the company store, entertainment, and the mine itself, offer an opportunity to hear the voices of the actual people who called Blue Heron home. These recollections supplement each structure's written text, display items, and historic photographs.





Ghost structures invite visitors to take a step back in time.

As you walk around this re-created town, listen to the words of the people of Blue Heron. They tell the story of their lives in this isolated mining community better than anyone.

Visitors to Blue Heron are free to walk across the original bridge and coal tippie. Built in the 1930's, this huge structure, some 900 feet long, once served to connect the mines on the west side of the river to the Blue Heron Mining Community. Now it offers visitors birds-eye views of both Blue Heron and the Big South Fork River.

Access to the Blue Heron Mining Community is just as unique an experience as visiting the site itself. In addition to trail, river, and road access, the site is also reachable by riding the Big South Fork Scenic Railway. Leaving from downtown Stearns, Kentucky, the train hugs cliffhines, follows roaring mountain streams, passes through a tunnel, and crosses over a bridge as it descends over 600 feet in five miles to the floor of the Big South Fork River valley and into Blue Heron. It is a wonderful trip through nature and back in time to Blue Heron, a fascinating piece of American history to be enjoyed by all.



Blue Heron shift workers in 1939.

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